

**EXCITING MYSTERIES**

# DETECTIVE

**FICTION WEEKLY**

FORMERLY **DETECTIVE**

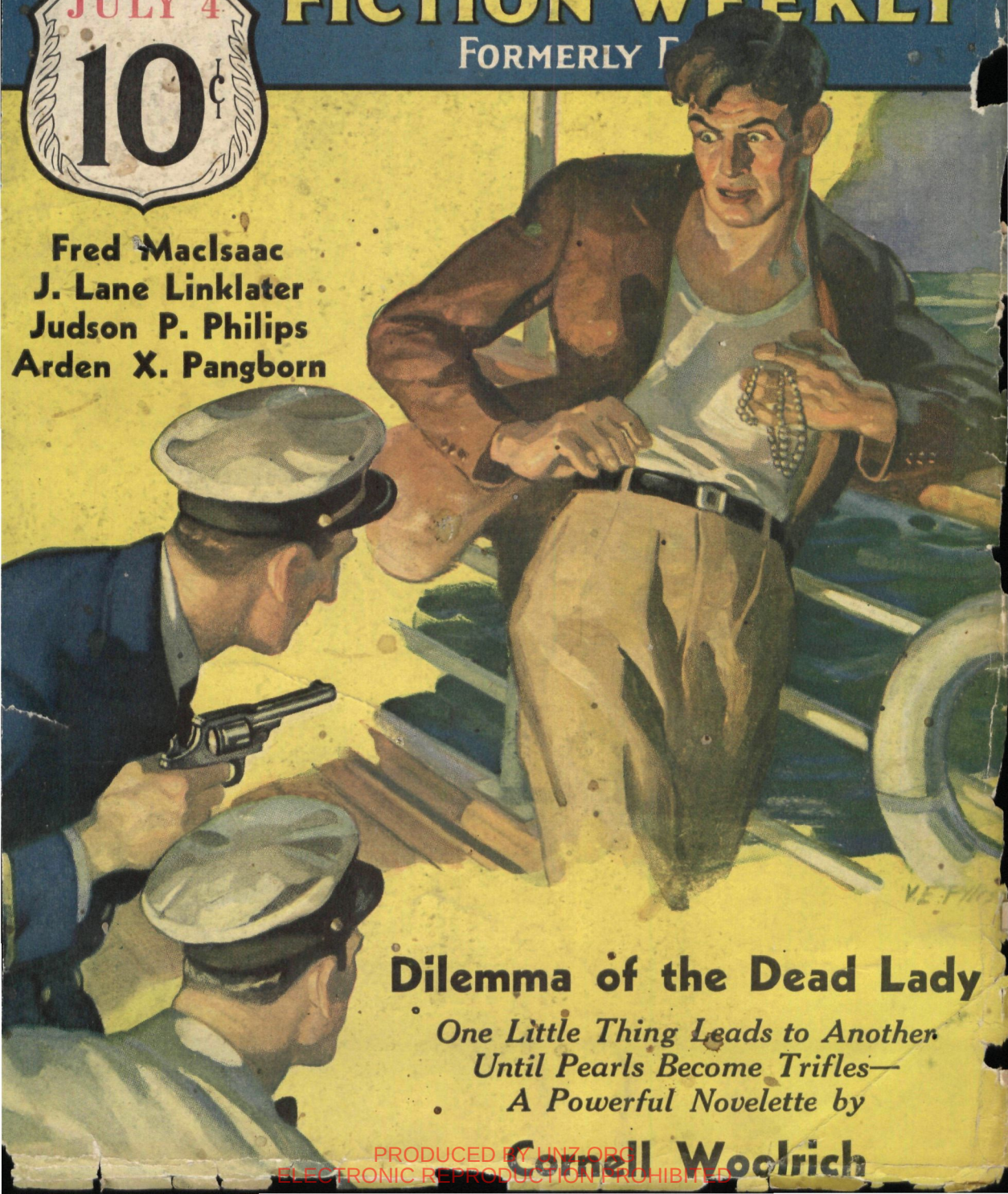


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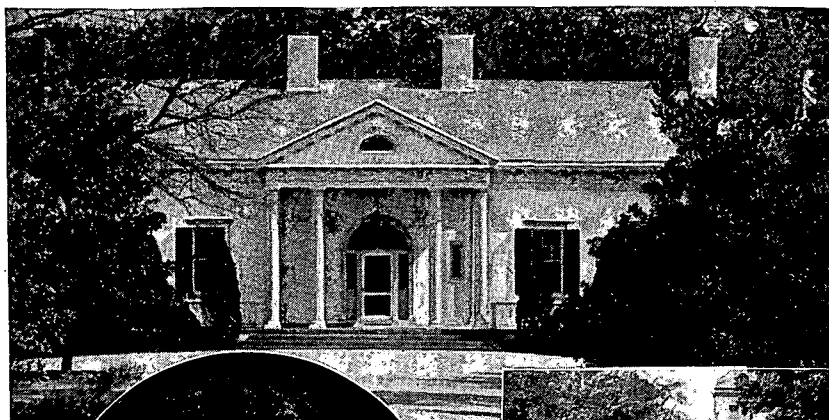


## **Dilemma of the Dead Lady**

*One Little Thing Leads to Another  
Until Pearls Become Trifles—  
A Powerful Novelette by*

**Cornell Woolrich**

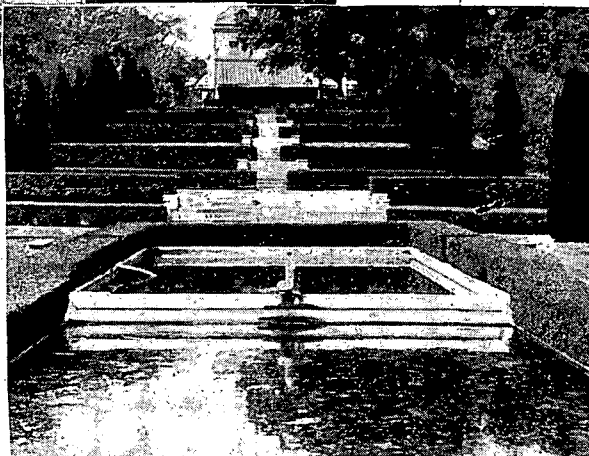
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*The entrance to Whitehall, Mrs. McCormick's estate at Aiken, S. C. Aiken is the meeting place of the world's celebrities—particularly those who love superb horses.*



**Mrs. Robert R. McCormick**  
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*The lovely terraced garden and pool on Mrs. McCormick's magnificent estate, Cantigny Farms, Wheaton, Ill.*

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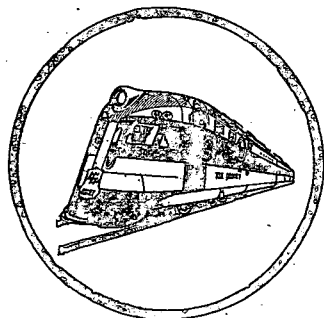
If you have not tried Listerine Tooth Paste, do so now. Like three million others you will be delighted by its brisk action, its thorough cleansing and the wonderful feeling of freshness and invigoration it leaves in the mouth. How assuring to realize, also, that this modern dentifrice is safe and gentle in action; nothing in it to mar precious enamel! Get a tube from your druggist today. Lambert Pharmacal Company, St. Louis, Missouri.

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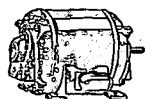


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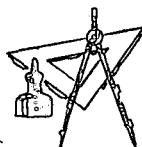
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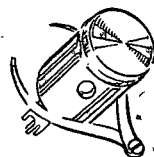


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# DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY



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VOLUME CIII

July 4, 1936

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280 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y.

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for Men Past 40!

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The kidneys are one of Nature's chief ways of taking acids and wastes out of the blood. A healthy person should pass about 3 pints a day and so get rid of more than 3 pounds of waste matter.

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Ask your druggist for Doan's Pills—used successfully by millions for over 40 years. They give happy relief and will help to flush out the 15 miles of kidney tubes. Get Doan's Pills.

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**Classified Forms Close Two Months in Advance**

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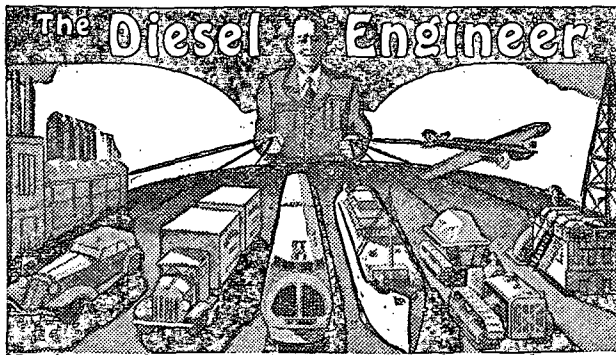
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### What This New Field Offers You

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| 28x40-18 | 1.85        | 30x40-18 | 1.85        |
| 28x40-17 | 1.85        | 30x40-17 | 1.85        |
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"What's the idea of the  
lock-out?"

# Dilemma of the Dead Lady

A Complete Novelette by

Cornell Woolrich

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---

*The Instant Babe Sherman  
Became Desperate, He Be-  
gan to Make Mistakes—  
Just Two Mistakes, but  
Either Could Cost His Life!*

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## CHAPTER I

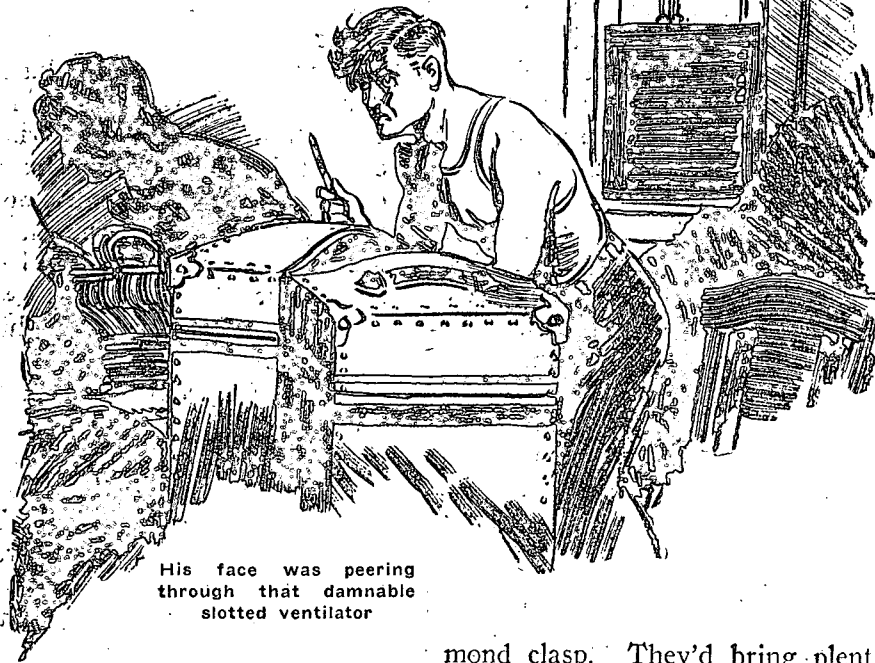
### The Kill

IT was already getting light out, but the peculiar milky-white Paris' street-lights were still on outside Babe Sherman's hotel-window.

He had the room-light on, too, such as it was, and was busy packing at a mile-a-minute rate. The boat-ticket was in an envelope on the bureau. All the bureau-drawers were hanging out, and his big wardrobe trunk was yawning wide open in the middle of the room. He kept moving back and forth between it and the bureau with a sort of catlike tread, transferring things.

He was a good-looking devil, if you cared for his type of good looks—and women usually did. Then later on, they always found out how wrong they'd been. They were only a side-line with him, anyway; they were apt

to get tangled around a guy's feet, trip him up when he least expected it. Like this little—what was her name now? He actually couldn't remember it for a minute, and didn't try to; he



His face was peering through that damnable slotted ventilator

wouldn't be using it any more now, anyway. She'd come in handy, though—or rather her life's savings had—right after he'd been cleaned at the Longchamps track. And then holding down a good job like she did with one of the biggest jewelry firms on the Rue de la Paix had been damned convenient for his purposes. He smiled when he thought of the long, slow build-up it had taken—calling for her there twice a day, taking her out to meals, playing Sir Galahad. Boy, he'd had to work hard for his loot this time, but it was worth it! He unwrapped the little tissue paper package in his breast-pocket, held the string of pearls up to the light, and looked at them. Matched, every one of them—and with a dia-

mond clasp. They'd bring plenty in New York! He knew just the right fence, too.

The guff he'd had to hand her, though, when she first got around to pointing out new articles in the display cases, each time one was added to the stock! "I'd rather look at you, honey." Not seeming to take any interest, not even glancing down. Until finally, when things were ripe enough to suit him: "Nice pearls, those. Hold 'em up to your neck a minute, let's see how they look on you."

"Oh, I'm not allow' to take them out! I am only suppose' to handle the briquets, gold cigarette cases—" But she would have done anything he asked her to by that time. With a quick glance at the back of M'sieu Proprietor, who was right in the room

with them, she was holding them at her throat for a stolen moment.

"I'll fasten the catch for you—turn around, look at the glass."

"No, no, please—" They fell to the floor, somehow. He picked them up and handed them back to her; they were standing at the end of the long case, he on his side, she on her side. And when they went back onto the velvet tray inside the case, the switch had already been made. As easy as that!

He was all dressed, even had his hat on the back of his skull, but he'd left his shoes off, had been going around in his stocking-feet, hence the catlike tread. Nor was this because he intended beating this cheesy side-street hotel out of his bill, although that wouldn't have been anything new to his experience either. He could possibly have gotten away with it at that—there was only what they called a "concierge" on duty below until seven, and at that he was always asleep. But for once in his life he'd paid up. He wasn't taking any chances of getting stopped at the station. He wanted to get clear of this damn' burg and clear of this damn' country without a hitch. He had a good reason, \$75,000 worth of pearls. When they said it in francs it sounded like a telephone number. Besides, he didn't like the looks of their jails here; you could smell them blocks away. One more thing: you didn't just step on the boat like in New York. It took five-hours on the boat-train getting to it, and a wire to Cherbourg to hold you and send you back could make it in twenty minutes. So it was better to part friends with everyone. Not that the management of a third-class joint like this would send a wire to Cherbourg, but they would go to the police, and if the switch of

the pearls happened to come to light at about the same time. . . .

He sat down on the edge of the bed and picked up his right shoe. He put the pearls down for a minute, draped across his thigh, fumbled under the mattress and took out a tiny screw-driver. He went to work on the three little screws that fastened his heel. A minute later it was loose in his hand. It was hollow, had a steel rim on the end of it to keep it from wearing down. He coiled the pearls up, packed them in. There was no customs inspection at this end, and before he tackled the Feds at the other side, he'd think up something better. This would do for now.

It was just when he had the heel fitted in place again, but not screwed on, that the knock on the door came. He got white as a sheet for a minute, sat there without breathing. Then he remembered that he'd left word downstairs last night that he was making the boat-train; it was probably the porter for his wardrobe trunk. He got his windpipe going again, called out in his half-baked French "Too soon, gimme another ten minutes!"

The knocking hadn't quit from the time it began, without getting louder it kept getting faster and faster all the time. The answer froze him when it came through the door: "Let me in, let me in, Bebé, it's me!"

HE knew who "me" was, all right! He began to swear viciously but soundlessly. He'd already answered like a fool, she knew he was there! If he'd only kept his trap shut, she might have gone away. But if he didn't let her in now, she'd probably rouse the whole hotel! He didn't want any publicity if he could help it. She could make it tough for

him, even without knowing about the pearls. After all, she had turned over her savings to him. Her knocking was a frantic machine gun tattoo by now, and getting louder all the time. Maybe he could stall her off for an hour or two, get rid of her long enough to make the station, feed her some taffy or other . . .

He hid the screwdriver again, stuck his feet into his shoes without lacing them, shuffled over to the door and unlocked it. Then he tried to stand in the opening so that she couldn't see past him into the room.

She seemed half-hysterical, there were tears standing in her eyes. "Bebé, I waited for you there last night, what happen'? Why you do these to me, what I have done?"

"What d'ya mean by coming here at this hour?" he hissed viciously at her. "Didn't I tell you never to come here!"

"Nobody see me, the concierge was asleep, I walk all the way up the stairs—" She broke off suddenly. "You are all dress', at these hour? You, who never get up ontill late! The hat even—"

"I just got in," he tried to bluff her, looking up and down the passageway. The motion was his undoing; in that instant she had peered inside across his shoulder, possibly on the lookout for some other girl. She saw the trunk standing there open in the middle of the room.

He clapped his hand to her mouth in the nick of time, stifling her scream. Then pulled her roughly in after him and locked the door.

He let go of her then. "Now, there's nothing to get excited about," he said soothingly. "I'm just going on a little business trip to, er—" He snapped his fingers helplessly, couldn't think of

any French names. "I'll be back day after tomorrow—"

But she wasn't listening, was at the bureau before he could stop her, pawing the boat-ticket. He snatched it from her, but the damage had already been done. "But you are going to New York! This ticket is for one! You said never a word—" Anyone but a heel like Babe Sherman would have been wrung by the misery in her voice. "I thought that you and I, we—"

He was getting sick of this. "What a crust!" he snarled. "Get hep to yourself! I should marry you! Why, we don't even talk the same lingo!"

She reeled as though an invisible blow had struck her, pulled herself together again. She had changed now. Her eyes were blazing. "My money!" she cried hoarsely. "Every sou I had in the world I turned over to you! My *dot*, my marriage dowry, that was suppose' to be! No, no, you are not going to do these to me! You do not leave here ontill you have give it back—" She darted at the locked door. "I tell my story to the gendarmes—"

He reared after her, stumbled over the rug but caught her in time, flung her backward away from the door. The key came out of the keyhole, dropped to the floor, he kicked it sideways out of her reach. "No, you don't!" he panted.

Something was holding her rigid, though his hands were no longer on her. He followed the direction of her dilated eyes, down toward the floor. His loosened heel had come off just now. She was staring, not at that, but at the lustrous string of pearls that spilled out of it like a tiny snake, their diamond catch twinkling like an eye.

Again she pounced, and again he forestalled her, whipped them up out of her reach. But as he did so, they

straightened out and she got a better look at them than she would have had they stayed coiled in a mass. "It is number twenty-nine, from the store!" she gasped. "The one I showed you! Oh, *mon Dieu*, when they find out, they will blame me! They will send me to St. Lazare—"

He had never yet killed anyone, didn't intend to even now. But death was already in the room with the two of them. She could have still saved herself, probably, by using her head, subsiding, pretending to fall in with his plans for the time being. That way she might have gotten out of there alive. But it would have been super-human; no one in her position would have had the self-control to do it. She was only a very frightened French girl after all. They were both at a white-heat of fear and self-preservation; she lost her head completely, did the one thing that was calculated to doom her. She flung herself for the last time at the door, panic-stricken, with a hoarse cry for help. And he, equally panic-stricken, and more concerned about silencing her before she roused the house than even about keeping her in the room with him, took the shortest way of muffling her voice. The inaccurate way; the deadly way. He flung the long loop of pearls over her head from behind like a lasso, foreshortened them into a choking noose, dragged her stumblingly backward. They were strung on fine platinum wire, almost unbreakable. She turned and turned, three time over, like a dislodged ten-pin, whipping the thing inextricably around her throat, came up against him, coughing, clawing at herself, eyes rolling. Too late he let go, there wasn't any slack left, the pearls were like gleaming white nail-heads driven into her flesh.

He clawed now, too, trying to free her as he saw her face begin to mottle. There wasn't room for a finger-hold; to pluck at one loop only tightened the other two under it. Suddenly she dropped vertically, like a plummet, between his fumbling hands, twitched spasmodically for an instant at his feet, then lay there still, face black now, eyes horrible protuberances. Dead! Strangled by a thing of beauty, a thing meant to give pleasure.

## CHAPTER II

### All Aboard!

ABE SHERMAN was a realist, also known as a heel. He saw from where he was that she was gone, without even bending over her. No face could turn that color and ever be alive again. No eyes could swell in their sockets like that and ever see again. He didn't even bend down over her, to feel for her heart; didn't say a word; didn't make a sound. The thought in his mind was: "Now I've done it. Added murder to all the rest. It was about the only thing missing!"

His first move was to the door. He stood there listening. Their scuffle hadn't taken long; these old Paris dumps had thick stone walls. Her last cry at the door, before he'd corralled her, had been a hoarse, low-pitched one, not a shrill woman's scream. There wasn't a sound outside. Then he went to the window, peered through the mangy curtains, first from one side, then the other. He was low enough—third story—and the light had been on, but the shutters were all tightly closed on the third floor of the building across the way, every last one of them. He carefully fitted his own together; in France they come inside the vertical windows.

He went back to her, and he walked all around her. This time the thought was, appropriately enough: "How is it I've never done it before now? Lucky, I guess." He wasn't as cool as he looked, by any means, but he wasn't as frightened as a decent man would have been, either; there'd been too many things in his life before this, the edge had been taken off long ago. He had no conscience.

He stooped over her for the first time, but only to fumble some more with the necklace. He saw that it would have to stay; opening the catch was no good, only a wire clipper could have severed it and he had none. He spoke aloud for the first time since he'd been "alone" in the room. "Y'wanted 'em back," he said gruffly, "well, y'got 'em!" A defense-mechanism, to show himself how unfrightened he was. And then, supreme irony, her given name came back to him at last, for the first time since she'd put in an appearance, "Manon," he added grudgingly. The final insult!

He straightened up, flew at the door like an arrow almost before the second knocking had begun, to make sure that it was still locked. This time it *was* the porter, sealing him up in there, trapping him! "M'sieu, the baggages."

"Wait! One little minute! Go downstairs again, then come back—"

But he wouldn't go away. "M'sieu hasn't much time. The boat-train leaves in fifteen minutes. They didn't tell me until just now. It takes nearly that long to the sta—"

"Go back, go back, I tell you!"

"Then m'sieu does not want to make his train—"

But he had to, it meant the guillotine if he stayed here even another twenty-four hours! He couldn't keep her in the damned place with him forever; he

couldn't smuggle her out; he couldn't even blow and leave her behind! In ten minutes after he was gone they'd find her in the room, and a wire could get to Cherbourg four-and-a-half hours before his train!

He broke for just a minute. He groaned, went around in circles in there, like a trapped beast. Then he snapped right out of it again. The answer was so obvious! His only safety lay in taking her with him, dead or not! The concierge had been asleep, hadn't seen her come in. Let her employer or her landlord turn her name over to the Missing Persons Bureau—or whatever they called it here—a week or ten days from now. She'd be at the bottom of the deep Atlantic long before that. The phony pearls in the showcase would give them their explanation. And she had no close relatives here in Paris. She'd already told him that. The trunk, of course, had been staring him in the face the whole time.

He put his ear to the keyhole, could hear the guy breathing there on the other side of the door, waiting! He went at the trunk, pitched out all the things he'd been stuffing in it when she interrupted him. Like all wardrobes, one side was entirely open, for suits to be hung in; the other was a network of small compartments and drawers, for shoes, shirts, etc. It wasn't a particularly well-made trunk; he'd bought it second-hand. He cleared the drawers out, ripped the thin lathe partitions out of the way bodily. The hell with the noise, it was no crime partly to destroy your own trunk. Both sides were open now, four-square; just the metal shell remained.

He dragged her over, sat her up in the middle of it, folded her legs up against her out of the way, and pushed

the two upright halves closed upon her. She vanished, there was no resistance, no impediment, plenty of room. Too much maybe. He opened it again, packed all his shirts and suits tightly around her, and the splintered partitions and the flattened-out drawers. There wasn't a thing left out, not a thing left behind, not a nail even. Strangest of biers, for a little fool that hadn't known her men well enough!

**T**HEN he closed it a second time, locked it, tilted it this way and that. You couldn't tell. He scanned his boat-ticket, copied the stateroom number onto the baggage label the steamship company had given him. 42-A. And the label read: NEEDED IN STATEROOM. It couldn't go into the hold, of course. Discovery would be inevitable in a day or two at most. He moistened it, slapped it against the side of the trunk.

He gave a last look around. There wasn't a drop of blood, nothing to give him away. The last thing he saw before he let the porter in was the hollow heel that had betrayed him to her lying there. He picked it up and slipped it in his pocket, flat.

He opened the door and jerked his thumb. The blue-bloused porter straightened up boredly. "*Allons!*" Babe said. "This goes right in the taxi with me, understand?"

The man tested it, spit on his hands, grabbed it. "He'll soak you an extra half-fare."

"I'm paying," Babe answered. He sat down on the edge of the bed and finished lacing his shoes. The porter bounced the trunk on its edges out of the room and down the passageway.

Babe caught up with him at the end of it. He wasn't going to stay very far away from it from now on. He

was sweating a little under his hat-band; otherwise he was okay. She hadn't meant anything to him anyway, and he'd done so many lousy things before now . . .

He'd never trusted that birdcage French elevator from the beginning, and when he saw Jacques getting ready to tilt the trunk onto it, he had a bad half-minute. The stairs wouldn't be any too good for it, either; it was a case of six of one, half a dozen of the other. "Will it hold?" he asked.

"Sure, if we don't get on with it." It wobbled like jelly, though, under it. Babe wiped his forehead with one finger. "Never dropped yet," the porter added.

"It only has to once," thought Babe. He deliberately crossed his middle and index fingers and kept them that way, slowly spiraling around the lethargic apparatus down the stair-well.

Jacques closed the nutty-looking little wicket gate, reached over it to punch the bottom button, and then came after him. They'd gone half a flight before anything happened. Then there was a sort of groan, a shudder, and the thing belatedly started down after them.

It seemed to Babe like they'd already been waiting half an hour, when it finally showed up down below. He'd been in and out and had a taxi sputtering at the door. The concierge was hanging around, and by looking at him, Babe could tell Manon had spoken the truth. He had been asleep until now, hadn't seen her go up.

The porter lurched the trunk ahead of him down the hall, out onto the Rue l'Ecluse, and then a big row started right in. One of those big French rows that had always amused Sherman until now. It wasn't funny this time.

The driver didn't mind taking it, but he wanted it tied on in back, on top, or even at the side, with ropes. The porter, speaking for Babe, insisted that it go inside the body of the cab. It couldn't go in front because it would have blocked his gears.

Sherman swore like a maniac. "Two fares!" he hollered. "Damn it, I'll never make the North Station—" A baker and a scissors-grinder had joined in, taking opposite sides, and a gendarme was slouching up from the corner to find out what it was about. Before they got through, they were liable to, at that . . .

He finally got it in for two and a half fares; it just about made the side door, taking the paint off it plentifully. The gendarme changed his mind and turned back to his post at the crossing. Sherman got in with it, squeezed around it onto the seat, and banged the door. He slipped the porter a five-franc note. "Bon voyage!" the concierge yelled after him.

"Right back at ya!" he gritted. He took a deep breath that seemed to come up from his shoes, almost. "Hurdle number one," he thought. "Another at the station, another at Cherbourg—and I'm in the clear!"

The one at the Gare du Nord was worse than the one before. This time it was a case of baggage car versus the compartment he was to occupy. It wasn't that he was afraid to trust it to the baggage car, so much—five hours wouldn't be very dangerous—it was that he was afraid if he let it go now, it would go right into the hold of the ship without his being able to stop it, and that was where the risk lay. He couldn't get rid of her at sea once they put her in the hold.

The time element made this second hurdle bad, too; it had narrowed down

to within a minute or two of train time. He couldn't buy the whole compartment, like he had the extra taxi fare, because there was already somebody else in it, one of these bulldog-type Yanks who believed in standing up for his rights. The driver had made the Gare like only a Paris driver can make a destination, on two wheels, and "All aboard!" had already been shouted up and down the long platform. The station-master had one eye on his watch and one on his whistle. Once he tooted that the thing would be off like a shot—the boat-trains are the fastest things in Europe—and Sherman would be left there stranded, without further funds to get him out and with a death penalty crime and a "hot" pearly necklace on his hands . . .

### CHAPTER III

#### Surprise

HE kept running back and forth between his compartment and the stalled baggage hand-truck up front, sweating like a mule, waving his arms—the conductor on one side of him, the baggage master on the other.

"Put it in the car aisle, outside my door," he pleaded. "Stand it up in the vestibule for me, can't you do that?"

"Against the regulations." And then ominously, "Why is this trunk any different from all the others? Why does m'sieu insist on keeping it with him?"

"Because I lost one once that way," was all Babe could think of.

The whistle piped shrilly, doors slammed, the thing started to move. The baggagemaster dropped out. "Too late! It will have to be sent after you now!" He turned and ran back to his post.

Sherman took out his wallet, almost emptied it of napkin-size banknotes—what was left of Manon's savings—about forty dollars in our money. His luck was he'd left that much unchanged yesterday, at the Express. "Don't do this to me, Jacques! Don't make it tough for me! It'll miss my boat if I don't get it on this train with me!" His voice was hoarse, cracked by now. The wheels were slowly gathering speed, his own car was coming up toward them. They'd been up nearer the baggage car.

The conductor took a quick look up and down the platform. The money vanished. He jerked his head at the waiting truckman; the man came up alongside the track, started to run parallel to the train, loaded truck and all. Babe caught at the next vestibule hand-rail as it came abreast, swung himself in, the conductor after him. "Hold onto me!" the latter warned. Babe clasped him around the waist from behind. The conductor, leaning out, got a grip on the trunk from above. The truckman hoisted it from below, shoved it in on them. It went aboard as easily as a valise.

They got it up off the steps and parked it over in the farther corner of the vestibule. The conductor banged the car door shut. "I'll lose my job if they get wise to this!"

"You don't know anything about it," Babe assured him. "I'll get it off myself at Cherbourg. Just remember to look the other way."

He saw the fellow counting over the palm-oil, so he handed him the last remaining banknote left in his wallet—just kept some silver for the dockhand at Cherbourg. "You're a good guy, Jacques," he told him wearily, slapped him on the back, and went down the car to his compartment. Hurdle num-

ber two! Only one more to go. But all this fuss and feathers wasn't any too good, he realized somberly. It made him and his trunk too conspicuous, too easily remembered later on. Well, the hell with it; as long as they couldn't prove anything!

His compartment mate looked up, not particularly friendly. Babe tried to figure him, and he tried to figure Babe. Or maybe he had already.

"Howja find it?" he said finally. Just that. Meaning he knew Babe had been working Paris in one way or another. Babe got it.

"I don't have to talk to you!" he snarled. "Whaddya think y'are; an income tax blank?"

"Tell you what I am, a clairvoyant; read the future. First night out you'll be drumming up a friendly little game—with your own deck of cards. Nickels and dimes, just to make it interesting." He made a noise with his lips that was the height of vulgarity. "Lone wolf, I notice, though. Matter, Sûreté get your shill?"

Babe balled a fist, held it back by sheer will power. "Read your own future." He slapped himself on the shoulder with his other hand. "Find out about the roundhouse waiting for you up in here."

The other guy went back to his Paris *Herald* contemptuously. He must have known he'd hit it right the first time, or Babe wouldn't have taken it from him. "You know where to find me," he muttered. "Now or after we're aboard. I'll be in 42-A."

The label on that wardrobe trunk of his outside flashed before Babe's mind. He took a deep breath, that was almost a curse in itself, and closed his eyes. He shut up; didn't say another word. When he opened his eyes again a minute later, they were focused

for a second down at the feet of the guy opposite him. Very flat, that pair of shoes looked, big—and very flat.

THE motion of the train seemed to sicken him for a moment. But this guy was going back alone. A muffed assignment? Or just a vacation? They didn't take 3,000-mile jaunts for vacations. They didn't take vacations at all! Maybe the assignment hadn't had a human quarry—just data or evidence from one of the European police files?

The irises of the other man's eyes weren't on him at all, were boring into the paper between his fists—which probably meant he could have read the laundry mark on the inside of Babe's collar at the moment, if he'd been called on to do so. Federal or city? Babe couldn't figure. Didn't look government, though. The dick showed too plainly all over him—the gentleman with the whiskers didn't use types that gave themselves away to their quarry that easy.

"So I not only ride the waves with a corpse in my cabin with me, but with a dick in the next bunk! Oh, lovely tie-up!" He got up and went outside to take a look at his trunk. Looked back through the glass after he'd shut the door; the guy's eyes hadn't budged from his paper. There's such a thing as underdoing a thing; there's also such a thing as overdoing it, Babe told himself knowingly. The average human glances up when someone leave the room he's in. "You're good," he cursed him, "but so am I!"

The trunk was okay. He hung around it for awhile, smoking a cigarette. The train rushed northward through France, with dead Manon and her killer not a foot away from one another, and the ashes of a

cigarette were the only obsequies she was getting. They were probably missing her by now at the jewelry shop on the Paix, phoning to her place to find out why she hadn't showed. Maybe a customer would come in today and want to be shown that pearly necklace, number twenty-nine; maybe no one would ask to see it for a week or a month.

He went back in again, cleaned his nails with a pocket-knife. Got up and went out to look in another half hour. Came back in again. Gee, Cherbourg was far away! At the third inspection, after another half hour, he got a bad jolt. A fresh little flapper was sitting perched up on top of it, legs crossed, munching a sandwich! The train motion gave him a little qualm again. He slouched up to her. She gave him a smile, but he didn't give her one back. She was just a kid, harmless, but he couldn't bear the sight.

"Get off it, Susie," he said in a muffed voice, and swept his hand at her vaguely. "Get crumbs all over it, it ain't a counter."

She landed on her heels. "Oh, purredon me!" she said freshly. "We've got the President with us!" Then she took a second look at his face. He could tell she was going mushy on him in another minute, so he went back in again. The flatfoot—if he was one—was preferable to that, the way he felt right now.

Cherbourg showed about one, and he'd already been out there in the vestibule with it ten minutes before they started slowing up. The train ran right out onto the new double-decker pier the French had put up, broadside to the boat; all you had to do was step up the companionway.

His friend the conductor brushed by, gave him the office, accomplished

the stupendous feat of not seeing the huge trunk there, and went ahead to the next vestibule. The thing stopped. Babe stuck his head out. Then he found out he wouldn't even need a French middleman, the ship's stewards were lined up in a row on the platform to take on the hand-luggage for the passengers. One of them came jumping over. "Stand by," Babe said. The passengers had right of way first, of course. They all cleared out—but not the wise guy. Maybe he'd taken the door at the other end of the coach, though.

Then the third hurdle reared—sky-high. "In the stateroom?" the steward gasped respectfully. "That's out of the question, sir—anything that size! That has to go in the hold!"

About seven minutes of this, two more stewards and one of the ship's officers—and he wasn't getting anywhere. "Tell you what," he said finally, groggy with what he was going through, "just lemme have it with me the first day, till I can get it emptied a little and sorted out. Then you can take it down the hold." He was lighting one cigarette from another and throwing them away half-smoked, his eyebrows were beaded with sweat, the quay was just a blur in front of him . . .

"We can't do that, man!" the officer snapped. "The hold's loaded through the lower hatches. We can't transfer things from above down there once we're out at sea!"

Behind Babe a voice said gruffly: "Lissen, I'm in there with him and I got something to say—or haven't I? Your objection is that it'll take up too much room in there, cramp the party sharing the cabin with him, right? Well, cut out this bellyaching, the lot of you, and put it where the guy wants

it to go! It's all right with me, I waive my rights—"

## CHAPTER IV

### Jockeying for Peace

BABE didn't turn around. He knew what had just happened behind him though, knew by the way their opposition flattened out. Not another word was said. He knew as well as if he'd seen it with his own eyes: the guy had palmed his badge at them behind his back!

He would have given anything to have it go into the hold now, instead, but it was too late! He swallowed chokedly, still didn't turn, didn't say thanks. He felt like someone who has just had a rattlesnake dropped down the back of his neck while he's tied hand and foot.

He got down from the car, and they hopped in to get it. He didn't give it another look. He headed slowly toward the companionway he'd been directed to, to show his ticket, and was aware of the other man strolling along at his elbow. "What's your game?" he said, out of the corner of his mouth, eyes straight ahead.

There was mockery in the slurring answer. "Just big-hearted. Might even help you make out your customs' declaration on what y'got in it—"

Babe stumbled over something on ground before him that wasn't there at all, stiff-armed himself against a post, went trudging on. He didn't have anything in his shoulder for this guy before. He had something in his heart for him now—death.

He looked up at the triple row of decks above him while an officer was checking his ticket and passport at the foot of the companionway. It was called the *American Statesman*.

"You're going to be one short when you make the Narrows seven days from now!" he told it silently. "This copper's never going to leave you alive."

They maneuvered the trunk down the narrow ship's corridor and into the stateroom by the skin of its teeth. It was a tight squeeze. It couldn't, of course, go under either one of the bunks. One remaining wall was taken up by the door, the other by the folding washstand, which opened like a desk. The middle of the room was the only answer, and that promptly turned the cabin into nothing more than a narrow perimeter around the massive object. That his fellow-passenger, who wasn't any sylph, should put up with this was the dearest give-away ever, to Babe's way of thinking, that he was on to something. Some of these punks had a sixth sense, almost, when it came to scenting crime in the air around them. He wouldn't need more than one, though, in about a day more, if Babe didn't do something in a hurry! It was July, and there were going to be two of them in there with it.

He tried half-heartedly to have it shunted down to the hold after all—although that would have been just jumping from a very quick frying pan to a slower but just as deadly fire—but they balked. It would have to be taken out again onto the quay and then shipped aboard from there, they pointed out. There was no longer time enough. And he'd cooked up a steam of unpopularity for himself as it was that wouldn't clear away for days.

The dick didn't show right up, but a pair of his valises came in, and Sherman lamped the tags. "E. M. Fowler, New York." He looked out, and he saw where he'd made still another mistake. He'd bought a cabin on the A-

deck, the middle of the three, just under the promenade deck; a C-cabin would have been the right one, below deck-level. This one had no porthole opening directly above the water, but a window flush with the deck outside. But then he hadn't known he was going to travel with a corpse, and her money had made it easy to buy the best. Now he'd have to smuggle her outside with him, all the way along the passageway, down the stairs, and out across the lowest deck—when the time came.

He beat it out in a hurry, grinding his hands together. Should have thought of it sooner, before he'd let them haul it in there! He'd ask to be changed, that was all. Get the kind he wanted, away from that bloodhound and by himself. Sure they could switch him, they must have some last-minute cancellations! Always did.

The purser spread out a chart for him when he put it to him in his office, seemed about to do what he wanted; Sherman felt better than he had at any time since five that morning. Then suddenly he looked up at him as though he'd just remembered something. "You Mr. Sherman, 42-A?" Babe nodded. "Sorry, we're booked solid; you'll have to stay in there." He put the chart away.

Arguing was no use. He knew what had happened; Fowler and his badge again. He'd foreseen this move, beat him to it, blocked it! "You weren't bragging, brother, when you called yourself a clairvoyant!" he thought bitterly. But the guy couldn't actually *know* what was in the trunk, what was making him act like this? Just a hunch? Just the fact that he'd sized Babe up as off-color, and noticed the frantic way Babe had tried to keep the trunk with him when he boarded the train?

Just the way any dick baited anyone on the other side of the fence, not sure but always hoping for the worst? Well, he was asking for it and he was going to get it—and not the way he expected, either. He'd foreclosed his own life by nailing Babe down in the cabin with him!

Just the same, he felt the need of a good stiff pick-up. They were already under way when he found his way into the bar, the jurisdiction of the French Republic was slipping behind them, it was just that pot-bellied old gent now with the brass buttons, the captain. The straight brandy put him in shape; the hell with both sides of the pond! Once he got rid of her there wouldn't be any evidence left, he could beat any extradition rap they tried to slap on him. Water scotches a trail in more ways than one.

HE spent the afternoon between the bar and 42, to make sure

Fowler didn't try to tackle the trunk with a chisel or pick the lock while his back was turned. But the dick didn't go near the cabin, stayed out of sight the whole time. The sun, even going down, was still plenty hot; Sherman opened the window as wide as it would go and turned on the electric fan above the door. It would have to be tonight, for plenty of good reasons! One of the least was that he couldn't keep checking on the thing like this every five minutes without going bughouse.

A steward went all over the ship pounding a portable dinner-gong, and Sherman went back to the cabin, more to keep his eye on Fowler than to freshen up. He wouldn't have put on one of his other suits now even if he could have gotten at it.

Fowler came in, went around on his

side of the trunk, and stripped to his undershirt. Sherman heard a rustle and a click, and he'd turned off the fan and pulled down the shade. Almost instantaneously the place got stuffy.

Babe said, "What's the idea? You ain't that chilly in July!"

Fowler gave him a long, searching look across the top of the trunk. "You seem to want ventilation pretty badly," he said, very low.

It hit Sherman, like everything the guy seemed to say, and he forgot what he was doing for a minute, splashed water on his hair from force of habit. When it was all ganged up in front of his eyes, he remembered his comb was in there, too, he didn't have a thing out. He tried combing it with his fingers and it wouldn't work. He stalled around while the dick slicked his own, waiting for him to get out and leave it behind.

The dick did some stalling of his own. It started to turn itself into an endurance contest, the second dinner gong went banging by outside the window. Sherman, nerves tight as elastic bands, thought: "What the hell is he up to?" His own shirt was hanging on a hook by the door, he saw Fowler glance at it just once, but didn't get the idea in time. Fowler parked a little bottle of liquid shoe-blackening on the extreme edge of the trunk, stopper out, right opposite the shirt. Then he brushed past between the two, elbows slightly out. He had no right to come around on that side; it was Sherman's side of the place. The shirt slipped off the hook and the shoe-polish toppled and dumped itself on top of it on the floor. The shirt came up black and white, mostly black, in his hand.

"Oops, sorry!" he apologized smoothly. "Now I've done it—have it laundered for you—"

Sherman got the idea too late, he'd maneuvered him into opening the trunk in his presence and getting a clean one out, or else giving up his evening meal; he couldn't go in there wearing that piebald thing!

He jerked the thing away from the detective, gave him a push that sent him staggering backwards, and went after him arm poised to sock him. "I saw you! Y'did that purposely!" he snarled. He realized that he was giving himself away, lowered his arm. "Hand over one of yours," he ordered grimly.

Fowler shook his head, couldn't keep the upward tilt from showing at the corners of his mouth though. "One thing I never do, let anybody else wear my things. "He fished out a couple of singles. "I'll pay you for it, or I'll have it laundered for you—" Then very smoothly, "Matter, mean to say you haven't got another one in that young bungalow of yours?"

Sherman got a grip on himself; this wasn't the time nor the place. After all, he still held the trump in his own hands—and that was whether the trunk was to be opened or to stay closed. He punched the bell for the steward and sat down on the edge of his berth, pale but leering.

"Bring me my meal in here, I can't make the dining-saloon."

Fowler shrugged on his coat and went out, not looking quite so pleased with himself as he had a minute ago. Sherman knew, just the same, that his own actions had only cinched the suspicions lurking in the other's mind about the trunk. The first round had been the detective's after all.

That thought, and having to eat with his dinner tray parked on top the trunk—there was no other place for it—squelched the little appetite he'd had to

begin with. He couldn't swallow, had to beat it around the other side and stick his head out the window, breathing in fresh air, to get rid of the mental images that had begun popping into his dome.

"Going soft, am I?" he gritted. After awhile he pulled his head in again. There were a few minor things he could do right now, while the dick was in the dining room, even if the main job had to wait for tonight. Tonight Fowler would be right in here on top of him, it would have to be done with lightning-like rapidity. He'd better get started now, paving the way.

## CHAPTER V

### Checkmate

HE closed the window and fastened it, so the shade wouldn't blow in on him. He set the untouched tray of food down outside the door, then locked it. The boat was a pre-war model reconditioned, one of the indications of this was the foot-wide grilled vent that pierced the three inside partitions just below the ceiling line—a continuous slitted band that encircled the place except on the deck-side. It was the best they could do in 1914 to get a little circulation into the air. He couldn't do anything about that, but it was well over anyone's head.

He got out his keys and he turned the trunk so that it opened *away* from the door. He squatted down, took a deep breath, touched the key to the lock, swung back the bolts, and parted the trunk. He didn't look up, picked up a handkerchief, unfolded it, and spread it over her face. He got out a couple of the shirts that had been furthest away, protected by other things, and his comb, and then he took

a file that was in there, and went to work on the pearls.

It was hard even to force any two of them far enough apart to get at the platinum wire underneath, without damaging them in the filing, but he managed to force a split in their ranks right alongside the clasp, which stood out a little because of its setting. The wire itself was no great obstacle, it was just getting the file in at it. In five minutes the place he had tackled wore out under the friction, and it shattered to invisibility. Three pearls dropped off before he could catch them and rolled some place on the floor. He let them go for a minute, poised the file to change hands with it and unwind the gnarled necklace—and heard Fowler saying quietly: “What’s the idea of the lock-out? Do I get in, or what?”

His face was peering in and down at Sherman through that damnable slotted ventilator, high up but on a line with the middle of the door, smiling—but not a smile of friendliness or good omen.

Sherman died a little then inside himself, like he would never die again, not even if a day came when he would be kneeling under the high knife at Vincennes or sitting in the electric chair at Ossining. Something inside him curled up, but because there was no blade or voltage to follow the shock, he went ahead breathing and thinking.

His eyes traveled downward from Fowler’s outlined face to the top of the trunk in a straight line. Her handkerchief-masked head was well below it on his side, her legs stayed flat up against her like he’d first folded them, from long confinement and now rigor. He thought: “He doesn’t see her from where he is. He can’t, or he wouldn’t be smiling like that!”

But the opening ran all around, on the side of him and in back of him. He must be up on a stool out there; all he’d have to do would be jump down, shift it further around to where he could see, and spring up on it again. If he did that in time, he could do it much quicker than Babe could get the trunk closed. “He hasn’t thought of it yet!” Babe told himself frantically. “Oh, Joseph and Mary, keep it from occurring to him! If I can hold him up there just a split minute, keep talking to him, not give him time to think of it—”

His eyes bored into Fowler’s, trying to hold him by that slight ocular magnetism any two people looking at each other have. He said very slowly: “I’ll tell you why I locked the door like that; just a minute before you showed up—”

*Whang!* The two halves of the trunk came together between his outstretched arms. The rest of it was just reflex action, snapping the bolts home, twisting the key in the lock. He went down lower on his haunches and panted like a fish out of water.

He went over to the door and opened it, still weak on his pins. Fowler got down off the folding stool he’d dragged up. If he was disappointed, he didn’t show it.

“I didn’t hear you knock,” Sherman said. There was no use throwing himself at him right now, absolutely none, it would be a fatal mistake. “I’ll get him tonight—late,” he said to himself.

Fowler answered insolently. “Why knock, when you know ahead of time the door’s going to be locked? You never get to see things that way.”

— “More of that mind-reading stuff.” Sherman tried to keep the thing as matter-of-fact as possible between

them, for his own sake, not let it get out of bounds and go haywire before he was ready. "I don't mind telling you you're getting on my nerves, buddy."

He spotted one of the pearls, picked it up before Fowler saw what it was, put it in his pocket. "First you gum up a good shirt on me. Then you pull a Peeping Tom act—" He kept walking aimlessly around, eyes on the floor. He saw the second one and pocketed that, too, with a swift snake of the arm. His voice rose to a querulous protest. "What are you, some kind of a stool pigeon? Am I marked lousy, or what?" Trying to make it sound like no more than the natural beef of an unjustly persecuted person.

Fowler said from his side of the trunk: "Couple little things like that shouldn't get on your nerves—" pause—"unless you've got something else on them already."

Sherman didn't answer that one, there didn't seem to be a satisfactory one for it. He couldn't locate the third pearl either—if there had been one. He wasn't sure any more whether two or three had rolled off her neck.

He flung himself down on his bunk, lay there on his back sending up rings of cigarette-smoke at the ceiling. Fowler, hidden on his side of the trunk, belched once or twice, moved around a little, finally began rattling the pages of a magazine. The ship steamed westward, out into the open Atlantic. They both lay there, waiting, waiting . . .

THE human noises around them grew less after an hour or so; suddenly the deck lights outside the window went out without warning. It was midnight. A minute later, Sherman heard the door open and close, and

Fowler had gone out of the cabin. He sat up and looked across the trunk. He'd left his coat and vest and tie on his berth—gone to the washroom. He listened, heard his footsteps die away down the oilcloth-covered passageway outside. That was exactly what Babe Sherman was waiting for.

He swung his legs down and made a bee-line across the cabin, didn't bother locking the door this time, it was quiet enough now to hear him coming back anyway. He went through that coat and vest with a series of deft scoops, one to a pocket, that showed how good he must have once been at the dip racket. The badge was almost the first thing he hit, settling his doubts on that score once and for all—if he'd still had any left. New York badge, city dick. Sherman had no gun with him, didn't work that way as a rule. He thought, "He almost certainly has. If I could only locate it before he comes back—" He didn't intend to use it in any case—too much noise—but unless he got his hands on it ahead of time, it was going to be very risky business!

The fool had left one of his two valises open under the bunk, ready to haul out his pajamas! Sherman went all through it in no time flat, without messing it too much either. Not in it. It was either in the second one, or he carried it in a hip-holster, but probably the former was the case. Then one of those hunches that at times visit the deserving and the undeserving alike, smote him from nowhere; he tipped the upper end of the mattress back and put his hand on it! A minute later it was broken and the cartridges were spilling out into his palm. He jammed it closed, put it back, and heaved himself back onto his own bunk just as the slap-slap of Fowler's footsteps started back

along the passageway. "Now, buddy!" he thought grimly.

Fowler finished undressing and got under the covers. "Gosh, the air's stale in here!" he muttered, more to himself than Sherman. "Seems to get ranker by the minute!"

"Whaddya want me to do, hand yuh a bunch of violets?" Babe snarled viciously. He got up and went out, for appearance's sake, then stayed just outside the door, head bent, listening. Fowler didn't make a move, at least not to or at the trunk. Sherman took good aim out through the open window that gave onto the little cubicle between their cabin and the next, let fly with the handful of bullets. They cleared the deck beautifully, every last one of them.

He went back in again, saw that Fowler already had his eyes closed, faking it probably. He took off his coat and shoes, put out the light, lay down like he was. The motion of the boat, and the black and orange frieze of the ventilator high up near the ceiling—the corridor lights stayed on all night—were all that remained. And the breathing of two mortal enemies, the stalker and the stalked. . . .

Sherman, who had cursed the ventilator to hell and back after it had nearly betrayed him that time, now suddenly found that it was going to come in handy after all. It let in just enough light, once your eyes got used to the change, so that it wouldn't be necessary to turn on the cabin light again when the time came to get her out. He couldn't have risked that under any circumstances, even if it took him half the night to find the keyhole of the trunk with the key. This way it wouldn't.

The guy was right at that, though, it *was* getting noticeable in here.

He planned it step by step first, without moving his shoulders from the berth. Get rid of her first and then attend to the dick later was the best way. She couldn't wait, the dick could. They had six days to go yet, and the dick couldn't just drop from sight without it backfiring in some way. Down here wasn't the right spot either. They might run into heavy weather in a day or two, and if he watched his opportunity he might be able to catch the dick alone on the upper deck after the lights went out. Even raise a "Man overboard!" after he went in, if it seemed advisable. Or if not, be the first to report his disappearance the day after.

So now for her. He knew the set-up on these boats. There was always a steward on night duty at the far end of the corridor, to answer any possible calls. He'd have to be gotten out of the way to begin with, sent all the way down to the pantry for something if possible. Yet he mustn't rap on the door here in answer to the call and wake the flatfoot. And he mustn't come back too quickly and catch Babe out of the cabin—although that was the lesser danger of the two and could always be explained away by the washroom. Now for it; nothing like knowing every step in advance, couldn't be caught off-base that way.

## CHAPTER VI

### Hare-and-Hounds

THERE is an art in being able to tell by a person's breathing if he is asleep or just pretending to be; it was one of Sherman's many little accomplishments. But there is another art, too, that goes with it—that of being able to breathe so you fool the person doing the listening. This,

possibly, may have been the other man's accomplishment. His breathing deepened, got scratchier—but very slowly. It got into its stride, and little occasional burblings welled up in it, very artistically. Not snores by any means, just catches in the larynx. Sherman, up on his elbow, thought: "He's off. He couldn't breathe that way for very long if he wasn't—be too much of a strain."

He got up off the bunk and put on his coat, so the white of his undershirt wouldn't show. He picked up the shirt that Fowler had ruined and balled it up tightly into fist-size, or not much bigger. He got out the trunk-key and put it down on the floor right in front of the trunk, between his bent legs. He spit muffledly into his free hand, soaked the hollow of it. Then he gave that a half-turn up against the lock and each of the clamps. The lock opened quietly enough, but the clamps had a snap to them that the saliva alone wouldn't take care of. He smothered them under the ganged-up shirt as he pressed each one back. He got it down to a tiny click. Then he took a long, hard look over at Fowler through the gloom. That suction was still working in his throat.

The trunk split apart fairly noiselessly, with just one or two minor squeaks, and he had to turn his head for a minute—for a different reason this time. The way it had opened, though, was all to the good, one side of it shielded him from Fowler's bunk.

He had to go carefully on the next step, couldn't just remove her. There were too many loose things in there, all the busted partitions and drawers would clack together and racket. He got them out first, piece by piece. She came last, and wasn't very heavy.

Now here was where the steward

came into it. He had a choice of risks: not to bother with the steward at all, to try sneaking down the passageway in the opposite direction with her. That was out entirely. All the steward would have to do was stick his head out of the little room where the call-board was and spot him. Or, to leave her out, but in here, in the dark, and tackle the steward outside. He didn't like that one either. Fowler might open his eyes from one moment to the next and let out a yell. So he had to get her out of here, and yet keep the steward from coming near her outside. The inset between the cabins, outside the door, was the answer—but the steward must *not* turn the corner and come all the way! It was all a question of accurate timing.

He was as far as the cabin door now, but that was a problem in itself. He was holding her up against him like a ventriloquist's dummy, legs still folded up flat while she hung down straight. He got the door open without any creaking, but a sunburst of orange seemed to explode around him and his burden. It didn't reach all the way to Fowler's berth, but it could very well tickle his eyelids open if it was left on too long.

He stepped across the raised threshold with her, holding onto the door so it wouldn't swing with the ship's motion. Then without letting go of it he managed to let her down to the floor out there. He turned and went in again alone, to ring for the steward; as he did so an optical illusion nearly floored him for a second. It was that Fowler had suddenly stiffened to immobility in the midst of movement. But he was in the same position that he had been before—or seemed to be—and his lids were down and the clucking was still going on in his throat. There was no

time to worry about it, either he was awake or he wasn't—and he wasn't, must have just stirred in his sleep.

The steward's bell, Sherman knew, didn't make any sound in the cabin itself, only way out at the call-board. He punched it, got back to the door before it had time to swing too far shut or open, and then eased it closed. She was right beside him on the floor out there, but he didn't look at her, listened carefully. In a minute he heard the put-put of shoeleather coming down from the other end of the passageway. Now!

He drifted negligently around the corner, started up toward the steward to head him off; the man was still two of those lateral insets away. They came together between his, Babe's and the next.

"Did you ring, sir?"

Sherman put his hand on the steward's arm appealingly. "I feel rotten," he said in a low voice. "Get me some black coffee, will you? Too many brandies all afternoon and evening." He looked the part, from what he'd just gone through—if nothing else.

"Yes, sir, right away," the steward said briskly. And then instead of turning back, he took a step to get around Sherman and continue on down the passageway, toward where the body was!

"What're you going that way for?" Sherman managed to say, gray now.

"The main pantry's closed, sir, at this hour. We have a little one for sandwiches and things in back of the smoking room, I'll heat you some up in there—"

"**H**ERE I go!" was all Sherman had time to think. The whole boat went spinning around him dizzily for a minute, but his re-

flexes kept working for him. Without even knowing what he was doing, he got abreast of the steward—on the side where she was—and accompanied him back, partly turned toward him. The steward was a shorter man, only Sherman's outthrust shoulder kept him from seeing what lay sprawled there as the inset opened out to one side of them. He pulled the same stunt he had on Fowler when he was getting the trunk closed under his nose, kept jabbering away with his eyes glued on the steward's, holding them steady on his own face.

The steward stepped past, and the opening closed behind him again. Sherman dropped back, but still guarding it with his body. His jaws were yammering automatically: "—never could stand the coffee in Paris, like drinking mud. All right, you know where to find me—"

The steward went on and disappeared at the upper end. Sherman, in the inset, crumpled to his hands and knees for a minute, like an animal, stomach heaving in and out. This last tension had been too much for him, coming on top of everything else. "All to keep from dying twenty years too soon!" he thought miserably, fighting his wretchedness.

He got himself in shape again in a hurry, had to, and a minute later was groping up the corridor in the opposite direction, lopsidedly, borne down by her dimensions if not her weight on one side, his other arm out to steady himself against the wall.

There was no one out at the stair-landing now that the steward was out of the way, and only a single overhead light was burning. He decided to chuck the stairs and do it right from this A-deck. One deck higher or lower couldn't make any difference if he went

far enough back to the stern. And there might be other stewards on night duty on the other deck levels.

He put her down for a minute on a wicker settee out there, unhooked the double doors to the deck, and looked out. Deserted and pitch-dark. A minute later she was out there with him, and the end of his long, harrowing purgatory was in sight. Babe couldn't keep his hands from trembling.

He didn't go right to the rail with her. There was still the necklace, for one thing, and then the nearer the stern the better to make a clean-cut job of it. You couldn't see your hand in front of your face beyond the rail, but the deck wall on the other side of him showed up faintly white in the gloom, broken by black squares that were the cabin windows.

Near the end of the superstructure there was a sharp indentation, an angle where it jutted further out, and in this were stacked sheaves of deck-chairs, folded up flat and held in place by a rope. There were, however, three that had been left unfolded side by side, perhaps made use of by some late strollers and that the deck-steward had missed putting away, and one of them even had a steamer-rug left bunched across it.

He let her down on one of them and bent over her to finish freeing the necklace. The handkerchief had remained in place all this time, for some reason. But it was one of his own and huge, touched her shoulders. He had to discard it to be able to see what he was doing. Loosened, the breeze promptly snatched it down the deck and it vanished. His hands reached for the loose end of the necklace, where he had already filed it through close to the clasp—and then stayed that way, poised, fingers pointing inward in a

gesture that was like a symbol of avarice defeated.

The platinum strand was there, but invisible now in the dark, naked of pearls! Not two or three but the whole top row had dropped off, one by one, somehow, somewhere along the way! The motion of carrying her, of picking her up and setting her down so repeatedly, must have loosened them one at a time, jogged them off through that break in the wire he himself had caused. And since it obviously hadn't happened while she was still in the trunk, what it amounted to was: he had left a trail of pearls behind him, every step of the way he had come with her from the cabin out here—like that game kids play with chalk-marks called "Hare-and-hounds"—but with death for its quarry. An overwhelming sense of futility and disaster assailed him.

They wouldn't stay in one place, they'd roll around, but they were there behind him just the same, pointing the way. It was only the top row that had been stripped clean, the other two had been tourniqueted in too tight for any to fall off . . .

He had no more than made the discovery, with his fingertips and not his eyes, than a figure loomed toward him out of the deck-gloom, slowly, very slowly, and Fowler's voice drawled suavely:

"I'll take the rest of 'em now, that go with the ones I been pickin' up on the way."

Sherman automatically gave the blanket beside him a flip that partly covered her, then stood up and went out toward him, knees already crouched for the spring that was to come. The gloom made Fowler seem taller than he was. Sherman could sense the gun he was holding leveled at him by the rigid foreshortening of

his one arm. The thing was, was it still empty or had he reloaded it since?

## CHAPTER VII

### The Furies Laugh

**H**E started circling, with Fowler for an axis, trying to maneuver him closer to the rail. That brought the chair more clearly into Fowler's line of vision, but the position of his head never changed, slowly turned in line with Sherman. Suddenly it dawned on Sherman that the dick didn't know the whole story even yet; hadn't tumbled yet to what was on that chair! Must have taken it for just a bunched-up steamer rug in the dark. Sure! Otherwise he'd be hollering blue murder by this time, but all he'd spoken about was the pearls. Hadn't seen Sherman carry her out after all, then; thought he was just on the trail of a jewel-smuggler.

"But in a minute more he'll see her; he's bound to!" he told himself. "Dark or not, his eyes'll be deflected over that way. And that's when—"

While his feet kept carrying him slowly sidewise across the deck, from the chair toward the rail, he muttered: "You will? Who says so?"

Fowler palmed his badge at him with his left hand. "This says so. Now come on, why make it tough for yourself? I've got you dead to rights and you know it! They're so hot they're smoking. Fork 'em over and don't keep me waiting out here all night, or I'll—"

Sherman came up against the rail. Had he reloaded that persuader or hadn't he? "I can only be wrong once about it," he figured grimly. He jerked his head at the chair. "The tin always wins. Help yourself!" His knees buckled a notch lower.

He saw the pupils of Fowler's eyes follow the direction his head had taken, start back again, then stop dead—completely off him. "Oh, so you *are* working with a shill after all! What's she showing her teeth, grinning so about? D'ye think I'm kid—?"

He never finished it. Sherman's stunning blow—the one he'd promised him in the train—his whole body following it, landed in an arc up from where he'd been standing. His fist caught Fowler on the side of the neck, nearly paralyzing his nerve-centers for a minute, and the impact of Sherman's body coming right after it sent him down to the deck with Sherman on top of him. The gun clicked four times into the pit of Sherman's stomach before they'd even landed, and the impact with which the back of the dick's head hit the deck told why it didn't click the two remaining times. He was stunned for a minute, lay there unresisting. Less than a minute—much less—but far too long!

Sherman got up off him, pulled him up after him, bent him like a jack-knife over the rail, then caught at his legs with a vicious dip. The gun, which was still in the dick's hand, fell overboard as he opened it to claw at the empty night. His legs cleared the rail at Sherman's heave like those of a pole-vaulter topping a bar, but his faculties had cleared just in time for his finish. His left hand closed despairingly around a slim, vertical deck-support as the rest of his body went over. The wrench nearly pulled it out of its socket, turned him completely around in mid-air so that he was facing Sherman's way for a brief instant. His face was a piteous blur against the night that would have wrung tears from the Evil One himself.

But a human being was sending him

to his death, and they can be more remorseless than the very devils of hell. "I don't want to die!" the blurred face shrieked out. The flat of Sherman's foot, shooting out between the lower deck-rails like a battering-ram, obliterated it for a minute. The gripping hand flew off the upright support into nothingness. When Sherman's foot came back through the rails again, the face was gone. The badge was all that was left lying there on the deck.

The last thing Sherman did was pick that up and shie it out after him. "Take that with you, Cop; you'll need it for your next pinch!"

Carrying out his original purpose, after what had just happened, was almost like an anticlimax; he was hardly aware of doing so at all, just a round-trip to the rail and back. He leaned up against the deck-wall for a minute, panting with exertion. The partly-dennuded necklace, freed at last from its human ballast, in the palm of his hand. "You've cost me plenty!" he muttered to it. He dumped it into his pocket.

Suddenly the deck-lights had flashed on all around him, as if lightning had struck the ship. He cringed and turned this way and that. They were standing out there, bunched by the exit through which he himself had come a little while ago, stewards and ship's officers, all staring ominously down toward him. He knew enough not to try to turn and slink away; he was in full sight of them, and a second group had showed up behind him, meanwhile, at the lower end of the deck, cutting him off in that direction. That last scream Fowler ripped out from the other side of the rail, probably; the wind must have carried it like an amplifier all over the ship at once.

"But they didn't see me do it!" he kept repeating to himself vengefully, as they came down the deck toward him from both directions, treading warily, spread out fanwise to block his escape. "They didn't see me do it! They gave it the lights out here just a minute too late!"

THE chief officer had a gun out in his hand, and a look on his face to match it. They meant business. One by one the cabin-windows facing the deck lighted up; the whole ship was rousing. This wasn't just another hurdle any more; this was a dead end—the last stop, and he knew it.

Suddenly he came to a decision. The net was closing in on him and in a minute more his freedom of action would be gone forever. He didn't waste it, but used it while he still had it to cut himself free from the first crime even while the second was tangling around him tighter every instant.

He found the rail with the backs of his elbows, leaned there negligently, waiting for them. Right as they came up, his elbows slipped off the rail again, his hands found his trouser-pockets in a gesture that looked simply like cocky bravado. Then he withdrew them again, gave one a slight unnoticeable backhand-flip through the rails. The motion, screened by his body, remained unobserved; their eyes were on his face. The necklace had gone back to Manon, the job had blown up—but it couldn't be helped, he had his own skin to think of now.

The chief officer's eyes were as hard as the metal that pointed out of his fist at Sherman's middle. "What'd you do with that man Fowler?" he clipped.

Sherman grinned savagely back around his ear. "What'd I do with

him? I left him pounding his ear in 42-A. We're not Siamese twins. Is there a regulation against coming out here to stretch my legs—?"

The night-steward cut in with: "I didn't like how he acted when he ordered the cawfee a while ago, sir. That's why I reported to you. When I took it in to him they were both gone, and the insides of this man's trunk were all busted up and lying around, like they had a fierce fight—"

A woman leaning out of one of the cabin-windows shrilled almost hysterically: "Officer! Officer! I heard somebody fall to the deck right outside my window here, the sound woke me up, and then somebody screamed: 'I don't want to die!' And when I jumped up to look out—" Her voice broke uncontrollably for a minute.

The officer was listening intently, but without turning his head away from Sherman or deflecting the gun.

"—he was kicking at a *face* through the rails! I saw it go down—! I—I fainted away for a minute, after that!" She vanished from the window, someone's arm around her, sobbing loudly in a state of collapse.

The net was closing around him, tighter, every minute. "We all heard the scream," the officer said grimly, "but that tells us what it meant—"

The bulky captain showed up, one of his shirt-tails hanging out under his hurriedly-donned uniform-jacket. He conferred briefly with the chief officer, who retreated a pace or two without taking his gun off Sherman. The latter stood there, at bay against the rail, a husky deck-hand gripping him by each shoulder now.

The gun was lowered, only to be replaced by a pair of handcuffs. The captain stepped forward. "I arrest you for murder! Hold out your

hands! Mr. Moulton, put those on him!"

The deck-hands jerked his forearms out into position, his cuffs shot back. The red welt across his knuckles where he'd bruised them against Fowler's jawbone revealed itself to every eye there.

He flinched as the cold steel locked around him. "I didn't do it—he tell overboard!" he tried to say. "It's her word against mine—!" But the net was too tight around him, there was no room left to struggle, even verbally.

The captain's voice was like a roll of drums ushering in an execution—the first of the hundreds, the thousands of questions that were going to torment him like gadflies, drive him out of his mind, until the execution that was even now rushing toward him remorselessly from the far side of the ocean would seem like a relief in comparison. "What was your motive in doing away with this man, sending him to his death?"

He didn't answer. The malevolent gods of his warped destiny did it for him, sending another of the stewards hurrying up from the deck below, the answer in both his outstretched hands, a thin flat badge, a gnarled string of pearls, half-gone.

"I found this and this, sir, on the B-deck just now! I thought I heard a scream out there awhile back and I went out to look. Just as I turned to come in again this, this shield landed at my feet, came sailing in from nowhere on the wind like a boomerang. I put on the lights thinking someone had had an accident down on that deck, and a little while afterwards I caught sight of this necklace down at the very end. The wind had whipped it around one of the deck-supports like a paper streamer—"

Sherman just looked at the two objects, white and still. The night had thrown back the evidence he had tried to get rid of, right into his very teeth! There were two executions waiting for him now, the tall knife at Vincennes, the electric chair at one of the Federal penitentiaries—and though he could only die once, what consolation was it that only by one death could he cheat the other?

The captain said: "He's as good as dead already! Take him down below and keep him under double guard until we can turn him over to the Federal authorities when we reach Quarantine."

SHERMAN stumbled off in the middle of all of them, unresisting.

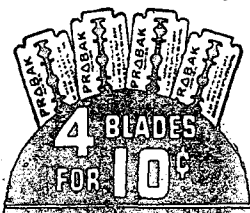
But he did crack up completely when the captain—just as they were taking him inside—unfolded a yellow

wireless-message and showed it to the chief officer. "Funny part of it is," he heard him say, "this came in not fifteen minutes ago, from the New York City police authorities, asking us to hold this man Fowler for them, for blackmail, for preying on people on ships and trains, impersonating a detective abroad. The badge is phony, of course. If our friend here had kept his hands off him for just quarter-of-an-hour more—"

Sherman didn't hear the rest of it. There was a rush of blood to his ears that drowned it out, and the laughter of the Furies seemed to shriek around him while they prodded him with white-hot irons. All he knew was that he was going to die for a murder that could have been avoided, in order to cover up one that otherwise would quite probably never have been revealed!



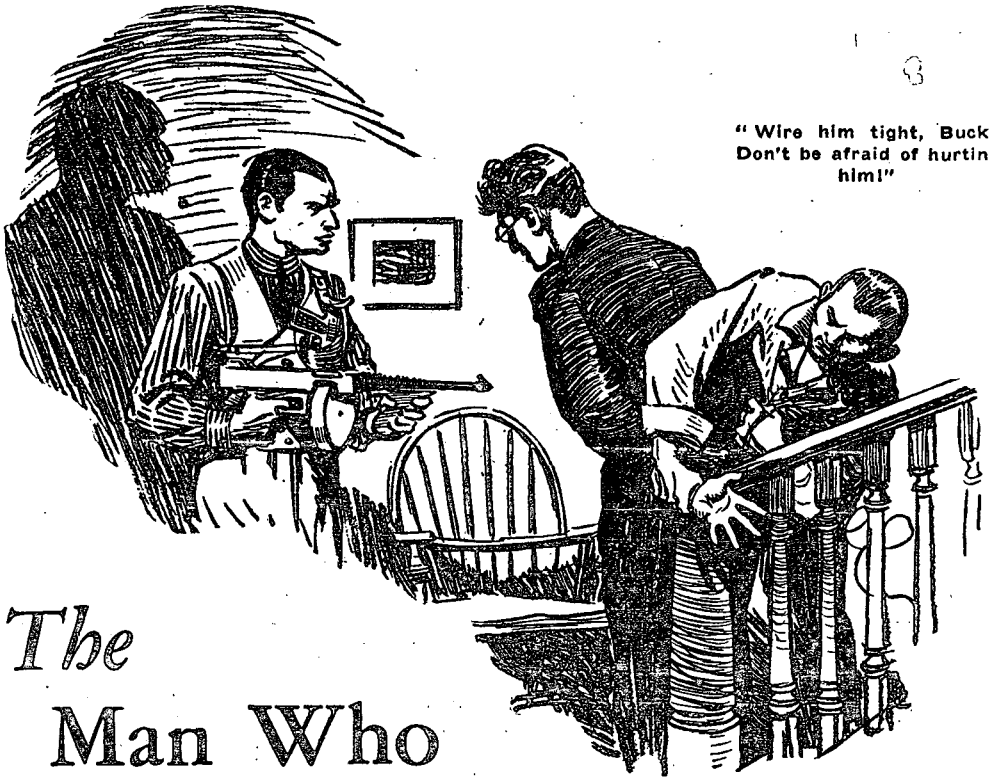
*The Odds Are  
Against You*



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"Wire him tight, Buck.  
Don't be afraid of hurtin'  
him!"

# The Man Who Took Chances

By  
Paul W. Pickelle

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*When Professor Benson  
Learned the Truth in  
That Hidden Lair, He  
Planned the Greatest  
Gamble a Man Can Take*

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ONE headlight was gone, and one spring. The mud-spattered sedan slithered and bobbed about on the narrow wooded lane like

a rowboat on an angry ocean. Rain beat like spray against the windshield, fallen branches slapped in the spokes.

The driver, alone in the car, fought the bucking wheel. Tall, slender, of indeterminate age, his somewhat gaunt features held an ascetic reserve. Gray eyes, narrowed behind horn-rimmed glasses which added to a scholarly appearance, strained on the dim swaying lane, on a solitary light, twinkling feebly through the writhing trees.

The light drew closer. It shone from the front window of a low stone farmhouse, sprawling like a giant spider in the storm-filled gloom of a clearing. Beyond, to the North, a shadowy barn, lesser outbuildings, loomed.

Jouncing, splashing through the puddles that dotted the barnyard, the sedan clanked to a stop. The driver

backed out on the running board, reached a gladstone from the tonneau, slammed the door. Head bent, he strode through the driving rain to the tiny back porch.

"Mary!" he called, pounding on the door. "It's Bob. Let me in."

The door opened slowly. Light from an oil lamp on a kitchen table fell softly about the slender figure of a girl, made a halo of her honey-colored hair. Wide blue eyes stared at him uncertainly.

"My dear!" he exclaimed, peering at her anxiously as he stepped inside. "What is the matter? Is mother ill? Was that why you wrote me to be sure to—"

He broke off. The girl wasn't looking at him. She was looking past him at the inside cellar door and the apprehension in her eyes was plain. He turned quickly. His dripping hat slipped from his fingers.

"What the deuce—"

Quite as casually as though the man belonged there, as though his powerful hairy arms held kindling wood instead of a sub-machine gun, a tall man in a blue shirt was pushing the cellar door open, lurching up into the kitchen. His sandy head was close-cropped, his long, leathery, unnaturally solemn face bristled with red whiskers.

He glanced at them broodingly, kicked the door shut with his heel. Fishing a key from his pocket, he locked the back door, backed slowly toward the corner by the kitchen range.

The scholarly-looking man took a step toward him. "May I inquire the reason—" he began icily.

"Please!" Mary clutched his arm. "It won't help to antagonize them. Don't you understand? We're prisoners. They've been here four days now."

"They? There are others?"

"Two others," she told him, and added hesitantly: "They have a—a little girl with them."

His tall, slightly stooped figure stiffened. He frowned down at her incredulously.

"Do you mean to infer—" he began sharply, then: "Good Lord, Mary! Not the Wallace child?"

She nodded uneasily.

"Been readin' the papers?" a harsh voice inquired, and they both turned to stare at the lean, swarthy man, in vest and shirt sleeves, who stepped, cat-footed, into the living room doorway.

Strapped to either side of his breast was a holster from which the flat black butt of an automatic pistol protruded. Unlike the man in the corner, he was shaven. His mustache was neatly trimmed. Light gleamed in his curly black hair, on the toes of his patent leathers, as he lounged there. And it glittered evilly in his slitted, darting eyes.

"Pleased to meetcha, Professor Benson," he said sardonically. "Nobody figures me for this snatch, but maybe you know who I am. Guess you've read about me, eh?"

THE professor peered at him after the fashion of the somewhat near-sighted. "That pleasure has, I fear, been denied me," he said coldly. "It so happens that I have little interest in crime or criminals."

"Yeah?" The swarthy man studied him skeptically.

"Naturally," the professor went on, "I am familiar with—ah—cases as prominent as this one. May I ask if you have arranged for the payment of the ransom?"

"Ask away," the swarthy man said.

He hooked a thumb in his vest, leaned his glossy head against the door casing. "How's the drivin'?" he demanded. "Pretty bad this side o' Big Indian, ain't it?"

"Very bad, indeed," the professor murmured.

The swarthy man chuckled. "Guess you wouldn't have plowed out here this week end," he said with satisfaction, "if I hadn't made Sister write you that long letter, tellin' you to be sure to come. You see, Benson, we need that heap of yours. Need it bad. Our wagon's got a broken drive shaft. So we ain't sorry to see you. Sister ain't sorry, either, eh?" He leered at Mary, whose pale cheeks flushed. "She thinks I'm tryin' to make her!"

"See here," the professor snapped, his cold voice suddenly brittle with anger, "I advise you to let my sister alone, or—"

"Or what?" the swarthy man sneered. "You try to pull somethin' and you'll get a bellyful of lead! The lot of you. You and your sister and your old lady!"

He turned his glittering glance on the man in the corner.

"Frisk 'im, Buck," he snarled. "Go through that bag, too. And if there's any booze in it, you let it alone. See?"

Buck grunted, put his weapon on the floor, lumbered to obey. The professor stood quietly while Buck's hairy paws explored his person. "Clean," Buck muttered morosely, and turned his attention to the gladstone.

"You will find no liquor," the professor assured him, removing his camel's hair topcoat. "Ah, yes, my slippers. Mind leaving them out?"

The swarthy man muttered: "Cool customer, ain't you? Too cool. I think we better fix you so's—"

He checked himself, turned, his

head jerking up as feet padded in the upstairs hall. "Whatsa matter, Joey?" he demanded, his voice rising shrilly.

A sallow youth in a blue double-breasted suit, with starey eyes and a receding chin, appeared on the top step of the open staircase that rose from a corner of the living room. "Sumpin' out there on the road, Tiger," he blurted, his cigarette trailing smoke as he motioned. "C'mon up an' take a look, will ya?"

"Watch 'em, Buck," Tiger flung over his shoulder as he sprang toward the steps.

The professor removed his horn-rimmed glasses, polished them with the handkerchief from the breast pocket of his excellently tailored dark gray coat. He appeared younger without them. Despite the streaks of gray in his light brown hair, he seemed scarcely more than thirty.

He glanced at the brooding watcher in the corner, clipped the glasses back on his straight nose.

"Mother is all right?" he inquired suddenly in a low tone.

Mary's face, turning from the shadow, showed the strain of the past four days. Her eyes were ringed, tired. She nodded hesitantly.

"And the little one?"

"Why, she—she seems to be. She caught a slight cold that hangs on. But it's in her head, not her chest. And mother's taking care of her. They're upstairs in the back room. Locked in there. These"—Mary bit her lip—"these men took planks from the barn and spiked them over the window. I'm only allowed in when I take their meals up."

"I presume you are obliged to do all the work? Prepare all the meals?"

Something in his tone caused her to catch her breath. She nodded slowly.

The professor selected a cigarette from a silver case, lit it with steady fingers.

He drew on it thoughtfully. Except for the sudden gusts of wind and rain that rattled and beat the window panes, and the monotonous tic, tic, tic of the clock on the shelf, the house was very still.

"If you have no objection," he said presently, turning to Buck, "I should like to dry my shoes. I am subject to colds, and I stepped in a puddle getting out of the car."

BUCK grunted. The professor twisted a chair from beneath the table and sat down. "Why mother must come to the wilds at this season is beyond me," he remarked wryly, sliding a brown oxford from under a gray spat. "Here, my dear," he added significantly, holding them both out. "The left in particular, in the vulnerable spot of Achilles, merits attention."

Mary took them. "I'll put them in the warming oven," she said. He nodded, reached his slippers from the open gladstone.

The swarthy man appeared in the doorway again. He had returned without sound.

"Aw, Joey's got the jitters," he said scornfully, in reply to Buck's questioning glance. "He imagines things. Say, you better look after Benson's heap. Run 'er into the barn before she floats away."

Buck glanced at the streaming window and cursed. "Rain," he grumbled. "Nothin' but rain." He hauled a suede windbreaker from behind the range, zipped it up under his bristling chin. Clapping on a shapeless hat, he handed the tommy to Tiger, let himself out the back door.

The swarthy man, staring at the girl's rounded silken calves as she reached up to put the oxfords in the warming oven, showed his white teeth in a flashing grin.

"Rustle some grub, Sister," he ordered. "And don't skip the crabapple jelly."

The professor coughed. "Nothing for me, Mary," he said. "I'm not hungry."

"First twist I ever saw had a swell shape and could cook, too," Tiger observed admiringly, and the girl's back stiffened, red mantling the soft curve of her neck. "We're gonna miss this grub plenty when we check outa here."

The professor crossed his knees, contemplated the effect of a spatted felt slipper. "I trust," he murmured, "that this checking out will not be too long delayed."

The swarthy man stared at him blankly for a moment. Then his sensual lips twisted downward in a sardonic smile. He said softly, spacing his words: "Maybe you won't be so damn anxious when the time comes."

A cup slipped from Mary's fingers, smashed to pieces on the floor. Her slender figure swayed; she put out a hand gropingly, like a person blinded, clutched at the rim of the sink to steady herself. The professor looked around slowly, sighed. His face was blank.

"In other words," he said quietly, "you intend to eliminate the possibility of our identifying you later. Is that it?"

The swarthy man didn't answer. But his frozen smile was as sinister, as deadly as a death sentence.

THE professor lit a fresh cigarette. He drew on it thoughtfully, listening to the whimpering sounds that came faintly from some-

where overhead. They seemed almost to be in the same room, those childish complainings seemed more insistent than the noisy ticking of the clock, the howling of the storm, the drumming of the sedan's motor as Buck drove across the barnyard.

Mary was listening, too. She paused from time to time as she laid the table. The swarthy man was inspecting the tommy; he wet a finger, rubbed out a scratch on its polished grip.

The clock chimed a quarter hour.

"Seven forty-five," Tiger muttered. "Get that news guy, Sister."

There was an old style bathtub battery set, a conic loudspeaker, on a stand near the living room fireplace. The dial was set on 47. Mary pulled out the gold knob-switch, and a barytone voice vibrated to an accompaniment of scratchy sounds.

"... overflowing its banks and flooding the streets. Villagers are abandoning their homes and fleeing into the mountains... From Rome today comes a report that Il Duce..."

The voice vibrated on. Mary moved slowly back to the kitchen, busied herself about the range.

"No further communications have been received from the kidnapers of little Betty Wallace," the voice reported presently, and Tiger's lean figure stiffened. "So far, the only contact has been the phone call received by Mr. Wallace shortly after the nurse, bound and gagged, and the tethered pony and empty cart were discovered in the woods on the Wallace estate. This call fixed the ransom at one hundred thousand dollars, promised instructions for payment later, and warned—"

"Quiet, you!" Tiger hissed, as Buck's dripping bulk barged in the back door.

"—against notifying the police, which had already been done. Fearing that widespread police activities may account for the kidnapers' silence, Hulbert Wallace today requested Governor Kirk to withdraw them from the case, and publicly stated his intention of paying the ransom demanded."

Tiger's teeth flashed. "He'll get his chance," he muttered. "Pretty quick now."

The voice continued: "Prince, the heroic police dog who was shot with a silenced revolver by one of the masked kidnapers when he sprang from the pony cart in an attempt to protect his little mistress, was buried on the estate yesterday... The weather man promises more rain tomorrow. High winds prevail along the..."

Buck cursed. He left a trail of glistening footprints on the linoleum as he lumbered toward his favorite corner. He shivered, warmed his cold hands over the range.

"Spring's broke," he grunted, looking at Tiger.

"Yeah? Can we fix it?"

"Guess so."

"... all for now. We'll be back with more news for you at eleven..."

"Shut it off," Tiger said. "Yes, you—" as the professor glanced up slowly. "Who the hell do you think I'm talkin' to?"

The professor obeyed, his face impassive. The swarthy man stopped him as he started back to the kitchen.

"Stay where you are... Buck, go dig up a piece of rope, or somethin'."

THE big man lumbered past the doorway, reached a flashlight from the shelf, stomped down the cellar stairs. From where he stood the professor could see Mary taking his shoes from the warming oven. He said

abruptly, as Tiger's glance also darted toward her: "For the first time I confess to a morbid desire to witness an electrocution."

Tiger stared. The professor nodded. "Yours," he said.

"Yeah? Well, don't plan on it."

"You can scarcely prevent me from planning. I have a curious presentiment that I shall be present when you die."

"Say, what the hell kind o'—"

"Mention of electrocution, of death, seems to disconcert you. But then, it would. You are, after all, the most cowardly type of criminal. You prey on helpless children. Thieves and murderers—"

"Cut it!" Tiger snarled.

"—shun you!" the professor went on, his cold voice lashing the swarthy man to fury. "The chair is your inevitable conclusion. Ah, well may you cringe from the thought. Swift, painless death!"

He smiled ironically. "Let me tell you, it may be relatively slow. In that fraction of an instant when the current strikes your brain, time, for you, may stand still! Your scorching flesh may writhe for—"

The swarthy man said through his teeth: "Cut it, I told you! One more crack outa you and I'll blast your guts out!"

The professor shrugged. White and trembling, Mary was rushing into the room. "Please! Oh, please!" she panted. Her eyes, frantically seeking his, were full of meaning. "Don't you see you're only making matters worse! Please—Bob!"

Buck came stomping up from the cellar. He was working a section of wire barrel hoop back and forth in his thick fingers. He worked it until it snapped, straightened it out.

Still smoldering with rage, the

swarthy man jabbed the tommy muzzle toward the newel post of the staircase. "Over there," he snarled. "Get your mitts behind you . . . Wire him tight, Buck. Don't be afraid of hurtin' him!"

Buck pulled the professor's wrists back of the post, looped the wire around them, drew it cruelly, wrapped it round and round, twisted the loose ends together. Stepping back, he surveyed his handiwork with gloating eyes.

Tiger thrust the sub-machine gun into his arms, stepped in front of the professor, his lips twisting in a savage smile. Still smiling, he smashed his fist into the helpless man's mouth. The professor's head rocked back, his glasses flew off. The girl uttered a piteous cry.

"Hey, Tiger!" It was Joey again, calling excitedly as he ran through the upstairs hall.

"What d'ya want?"

The fallow youth appeared at the head of the stairs, glanced incuriously at the professor, who was sagging drunkenly against the post, gulped.

"Listen," he said earnestly. "Maybe you'll think I'm screwy, but I swear I heard a car go along that back road a couple minutes ago."

"So what?"

"I didn't see no lights, that's what! But I heard it! Honest to—"

"Aw, nuts. You're probably dreamin' again," Tiger muttered. He hesitated, ground his heel viciously on the professor's glasses as Mary moved to pick them up, finally started up the steps.

Buck motioned Mary back to the kitchen, followed her there, made her lift the lamp. Dishes and silver rattled as he pulled the table out from the wall, shoved it in line with the doorway. He seated himself so he could watch the professor, put the tommy

gun on his knees under the white cloth.

"Coffee," he grunted.

"It's — it's not quite ready yet," Mary protested, glancing at the gurgling percolator. "I'll fry your eggs while you're waiting."

"Hot anyway," Buck insisted. "Warm me up." He jabbed a thumb at the cups on the back of the stove.

Her hand shook as she poured, handed him a cup.

He gulped down the fiery liquid black, held the empty cup out for more. Buttering and spreading jelly on a thick slice of bread, he munched with bovine complacency, sipped more coffee, while he waited for the eggs.

Minutes passed. In the living room the professor, head bent, still sagged against the post. There was a bright thread of crimson on his left chin. The girl glanced at him furtively as she served Buck.

"I wish they'd come on," she muttered.

Buck grunted without interest, yawned as he picked up a fork. His appetite seemed to have waned. He contemplated his plate broodingly.

More minutes went by. Outside, rain beat, furiously crescendo, against the panes, wind slashed and whined through the trees. But within the old stone farmhouse, ominous quiet prevailed. The professor neither moved nor spoke. The bewhiskered kidnaper yawned again, and scowled at his cigarette as though it displeased him.

And upon the girl's face, as she mechanically set about tidying the kitchen, the shadow of desperation deepened.

**T**IGER descended the stairs slowly, silently. His restless glance darted uneasily from the professor's bent head to the vibrant windows.

He moved swiftly toward them, muttered: "Enough to get anybody jittery, lookin' out . . ." The rest was lost as he drew down a shade to cover the ultimate inch of dark glass. Lowering the flame of the hanging lamp, he moved on into the kitchen.

Jerking back a chair, he dropped into it, drummed lean fingers on the cloth while he waited for Mary to serve him. "We been figurin', Buck," he said reflectively. "We'll make Wallace deliver at night, on the lake."

"Huh?" Buck stared at him with bleary, uncomprehending eyes.

"I said—Aw, nuts, clean your ears out!" Tiger snorted disgustedly. He scowled at the coffee Mary set before him, reached for the evaporated milk. Glancing up again, he ripped out irritably:

"Well, what the hell are you waitin' for? Get on up and relieve Joey. And keep your eyes open," he added, as the other man lurched unsteadily to his feet. "I ain't so sure—"

He stopped, his eyes narrowing as his glance followed Buck around the table.

The bewhiskered giant was weaving and wobbling like a man sopped with liquor.

"What's the matter with you?"

Buck lurched around. "Noshin'," he mouthed thickly. "'M awrright—"

"Like hell you are!" Tiger sprang to his feet. "You're drunk! Or doped!" He went suddenly rigid. "Doped! That's it, by—"

He whirled on the girl, seized her wrist.

"Damn you! What'd you give 'im?"

"I didn't—" she gasped. Her eyes were dark wells of terror. "I— Oh, please! You—you're hurting—"

"Yeah? I oughta twist your neck

instead," he snarled. His furious glance darted from the professor who had come tensely erect, to the be-whiskered giant who had slumped heavily into a chair. Flinging the girl roughly aside, he gripped the broad blue shoulders with both hands, shook them savagely.

"Buck! Did Benson pass the twist anything? She take anything outa the bag?"

Buck's head wobbled. He blinked stupidly. — Tiger slapped him, hard. "Talk, damn you!"

Buck's bristling features worked. Unintelligible animal growls issued from his throat.

His dull eyes fixed on a spot beneath the range.

Interpreting the glance, Tiger whirled, and suddenly caught sight of the professor's oxfords.

He hooked them out with his toe, picked them up. Cursing under his breath, he examined them, discovered a small leather plug in the arched front of the left heel. He picked it out with his fingernail, shook the oxford over the tablecloth.

A few grains of white powder, a crumpled bit of paper, fell out.

The swarthy man recoiled as from a blow. There was dismay as well as rage on his face. His fingers shook as he smoothed the paper, read the fine writing on it.

"Smart, ain't you?" he ground out furiously, glaring at the girl. "You begged me to let you write your brother. Wanted to stall him off in case he took a notion to plow out here tonight." He snorted disgustedly. "And I fell for it. Did exactly what you figured. Thought I saw a swell chance to get the heap we had to have and made you—"

He thrust his menacing face for-

ward. "What'd you put over in that letter?"

SHE shook her head dumbly, shrank back against the cupboard as his clutching fingers reached out. Her face was white as death.

"Come across, you little—"

"Tell him." It was the professor who called. His voice was quiet, controlled. His face, in the dim yellow light of the hanging lamp, was set like marble.

For a moment the terrified girl was unable to comply. She was shaking uncontrollably. Her voice, when it came, was little more than a tremulous whisper.

"B-Bob doesn't drive since the accident last—I mean, he—he would wonder why I'd ask him—" She hesitated, seemed to cast about for words.

"Go on," Tiger rasped. "Spill it." His brows were knit, his glittering eyes slitted.

"Well, I—I wrote the note in pencil on lined paper. If you remember, it went something like this: 'Mother wants you to be sure to drive up this week-end. Can't call you as the phone is out of order. Everything is all right, don't worry,' and so on."

"Yeah. Go on."

She drew a shuddering breath. "I worked a shorthand message into the note by shading and distorting certain letters. The name 'Wallace' fits a capital c pretty well, with a dot added. I put it in 'Call.' 'Child' can be written with just a hook above the line, and I stressed part of the 'l' in the same word. 'Here' goes below the line. It fitted into the 'y' in 'you.' And 'Help' went into the capital 'e' in 'Everything.' Bob used to teach shorthand; he couldn't fail to notice the dots and the odd letter formations."

The swarthy man glared at her for a long moment. Without a word he turned, stepped into the doorway.

"Joey!" he shouted hoarsely. "Come down!"

The sallow youth's feet padded in the upstairs hall, clattered on the stairs. Catching sight of Buck's slumped figure, he brought up short.

"Wha-what's the matter wit' him?" he gasped.

"Knockout dope," Tiger snarled. "Chloral or somethin'! Only for a lucky break you and me woulda got it, too." He held out the bit of paper. "The twist poked this back where she got it, and I found it. The stuff was in it. See the writin'? Directions for dopin' our coffee!"

He turned his murderous eyes on the professor.

"There's the rat brought it in. Kept me talkin' while the twist used it."

Joey blanched. "But—but hōw—"

"Never mind how!" Tiger cut him short. "We got other things to worry about. This rat ain't the twist's brother. They been puttin' on an act for us. My guess is—he's a Federal dick!"

THE sallow youth's quick breathing made a hissing sound. "That car!" he choked. "Tiger—that car! The one I heard and couldn't see. You s'pose—"

"Yeah. More Feds." The swarthy man seemed to have regained control of himself again. His voice was harsh, but steady. "Outside—waitin'—"

Joey swung toward the prisoner at the post, who stood motionless, his blood-smeared face white, set. There was an insane flare in the youthful kidnaper's eyes. Saliva, drooling from the corners of his writhing mouth, was like foam on the fangs of a mad dog. He

thrust a hand inside his double-breasted coat, whipped out a pistol.

"Put it up!" The swarthy man grappled his wrist. "You wanna bring 'em down on us? That's what they're waitin' for—a shot, or a signal!"

The prisoner straightened his stooped shoulders. His eyes were no longer the eyes of a near-sighted man. They were very bright and intent. He said quietly:

"Right. You're in a spot. Resist and you'll be shot down. Surrender and you'll at least keep living awhile."

The swarthy man laughed, a short, ugly laugh, that dulled the sudden hope in Mary's eyes. "Think I'm crazy, Fed?" he sneered. "You know damn well we're holdin' all the aces!"

Joey muttered: "What d'ya mean—aces?"

"I'll show you." Tiger sprang toward Buck, whose hanging head was rising and falling with raucous, rhythmic sound, the sub-machine gun still resting across his knees. His right arm flopped, dangled, as Tiger caught the weapon up.

"Inside," Tiger commanded harshly, motioning the girl into the living room. "Take the wire off his wrists, Joey."

The sallow youth opened his mouth to protest.

"Take it off," Tiger lashed out fiercely. "I know what I'm doin'."

Muttering under his breath, Joey untwisted the wire ends, unwrapped the tightly drawn coils. The F. B. I. man brought his arms forward stiffly. Mary uttered a compassionate cry. His fingers were dead white, bloodless; his wrists raw, purple. He smiled at her wryly, rubbed them awkwardly against his coat.

"Up," Tiger said. "Both of you."

With dragging steps Mary started up the stairs. The Federal man fol-

lowed, the armed kidnapers bringing up in the rear:

Slowly, they climbed, their shadows, distorted silhouettes of despair, grim acceptance and dual menace, climbing beside them on the wall.

As they crossed the dim upper landing, Tiger drew a flash from his pocket, snapped it on. Light danced in the long dark hall. It played across the shaded windows at either end, over the maroon runner, littered with cigarette butts, on the floor. It glinted on the ornate gilt frames of the family portraits that hung on the walls between the doors of the rooms. Three of the doors were open.

"Take a look, Joey," Tiger said.

They stood waiting, while Joey went swiftly from one to another of the accessible rooms, peered into the storm-filled clearing. He returned, shook his head briefly. They moved toward a door at the extreme right.

This door was closed.

Joey unlocked it with a key Tiger handed him, flung it wide.

THE Federal man looked into the dim, shadowy room. Light came from a small lamp on a massive dresser between boarded windows. Its flame was low. His glance went from the lamp to the mirror, which reflected that portion of the room obscured by the open door.

It was there, beside a dark four-poster, that Mary's mother sat. Her gray head lifted, and he saw that her wrinkled face held the serenity of age, that her faded eyes, turned toward the youthful kidnaper, were calmly questioning, without fear. "Hush!" she admonished softly. "She's just dropped off to sleep," and, leaning a little forward, he saw the child, saw rather, the reflection of her tiny white form, her

dimpled upflung hand, her golden curls.

"Get in there!" Tiger's command was rasping blasphemy. "Not you—" as the Federal man moved to follow Mary. "You're stayin' here. . . Get against that wall."

The Federal man obeyed. Tiger, careful to keep several paces away, studied him for a moment with narrowed eyes.

"Now, get this," he gritted at length, "and get it straight. Joey heard the car creepin' along the back lane. That checks. The trees are closest to the house there and that's where the rest of you Government dicks are waitin'. So, in a coupla minutes, you're gonna raise that shade and open the window. You're gonna take this flash and wave it back and forth and shout to 'em. And, when they answer, you're gonna tell 'em to come on, that we're all out cold!"

The Federal man was as rigid as an iron bar against the wall. His eyes were like bits of glass. He shook his head slowly, deliberately.

"Oh, no," he said. "You're wrong."

"Think so?" Tiger's white teeth flashed. He raised the Tommy suggestively. "In the belly, Fed. The hard way—"

The Federal man wet his lips. "I know."

"I'm afraid you don't," Tiger said. His voice was quite soft. "We're gonna leave this door open, you see. And when you get it, you won't be . . . the . . . only . . . one!"

The Federal man looked at him for a long moment. Then he sighed and turned his head toward the drawn shade. And his eyes, as he stared at it, were blank, as though he did not see it at all. As though he were look-

ing beyond it into the immediate future, seeing, perhaps, the shadowy figures of a little band of men, men who knew him, trusted him, approaching unsuspectingly through the storm and dark—approaching death. He sighed again and turned back to Tiger.

"Very well," he said.

THE swarthy man smiled triumphantly. A furious gust of wind and rain battered the windows, drowned the excited whispering of the women in the nearby room. The Federal man rocked a little on the balls of his feet, turned his inscrutable gaze on the sallow youth, who was standing in the lighted doorway, taut with expectancy.

"Get the suitcase, Joey." Tiger's rasp jolted the youth into motion. "We can use that other chop—"

"Block the door!" the Federal man yelled as he leaped. His tall figure shot across the hall like a missile fired from a catapult. His arms whipped around Joey, swung him. Tiger threw the Tommy up, froze. For the muzzle was on Joey. The Federal man was behind Joey, holding his writhing body in a clutch of steel. And Joey, struggling helplessly, was mad with terror.

"No—Tiger!" he screamed. "No!"

An instant Tiger hesitated in furious indecision, while the Federal man dragged Joey swiftly backward. Then he sprang toward them, the barrel of his weapon upraised to slash . . . stopped short as the Federal man whipped the pistol from beneath Joey's coat. The Federal man fired. Twice. The bullets slammed Tiger back against the wall.

He swayed and his knees buckled. But he kept his feet, and he got the sagging machine gun up to his shoulder again. The wild eyes of the terrified

wretch in the Federal man's arms stared into its weaving muzzle, into the murderously contorted face above it, and his blood-curdling shriek knifed through the hall.

Mary had reached the door; the hall went dark as it slammed. Joey's writhing shoulder jostled the throbbing pistol in the Federal man's hand; it spat orange flame at the ceiling. The Federal man heaved, hurled the youth and himself sideways into the black mouth of an open doorway.

The hall blazed, thundered. Stuttering flashes streamed into their entwined falling forms. Joey's body jerked in the Federal man's arms. Searing lead smashed into the Federal man's thigh, his ribs, his shoulder, close to his heart. White hot pain struck through his shuddering flesh.

They crashed on the floor beyond the sill, the Federal man flat on his back, pinned beneath Joey's riddled body. Slantwise across the doorway, almost across their feet, the machine gun hammered flaming lead.

Abruptly, it stopped. Poisonous air swirled over them. And in the sudden incredible silence, the Federal man heard Tiger fall, heard, with terrible clarity, the scratching sounds as the swarthy kidnaper's fingernails clawed at the maroon runner, the choking sobs as life went out of him.

The Federal man still lay on his back. His body was no longer afire. It was numb. Vaguely he was aware of hurrying footsteps, of the frightened crying of a child, of voices. Voices that he knew. Among them, that of a former colleague, crippled in an auto accident last Fall, the man who had brought Mary's curious letter to him—the real Professor Benson. "Colby!" Benson was saying huskily. "Colby, old man!"

Hands touched him. Carried him. After a long time, a voice with a professional ring said, far away: "A chance—perhaps—"

Federal agent Jim Colby smiled a little into the dark. He was accustomed to taking chances. They had always been part of his daily routine.

## Cipher Solvers' Club for April

*Continued from Last Week*

*Cryptogram solvers sent us 5,438 answers to the twenty-four ciphers, Nos. 79-102, inclusive, published in our cipher department during April, raising our total for this year to 25,168 answers! Your name is listed below if you submitted solutions to any of the April brain-teasers! Inner Circle Club members who have individual records of 1,000 or more answers are indicated by asterisks. Watch for our May Solvers' Club in an early issue—and keep your answers coming!*

*Twenty-four Answers*—Jaefsee, Accord, N. Y.; Jaleco, Los Angeles, Calif.; \*Jayel, Canton, Ohio; \*Jayem, Bellingham, Wash.; \*U. U. Jeff, Massillon, Ohio; Jonesibus, Austin, Tex.; Kate, Crowley, La.; Ker, Saginaw, Mich.; Kismet, Corona, N. Y.; Paul S. Kissick, Washington, D. C.; Doc K, Cicero, Ill.; Edward L. Kowalski, Chicago, Ill.; \*Kriptobens, Paducah, Tex.; Marie Kristjansson, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Lethargic, Los Angeles, Calif.; Leotta Lowery, New York, N. Y.; \*E. H. Loyd, Jr., Chicago, Ill.; Mrs. Bertha Luckmun, Ocheyedan, Iowa; \*Nice, A. M., Indianapolis, Ind.; \*Magi, Chicago, Ill.; Bernard McGee, Bloomfield, N. J.; Del J. McLane, East Liverpool, Ohio; Minerva, Marion, Ind.; Mogliatina, Bayonne, N. J.; Mossback, Randle, Wash.; Betty Murray, San Francisco, Calif.; B. Natural, Rochester, N. Y.; Nedyah, New York, N. Y.; Hard Boiled One, San Francisco, Calif.; \*M. O., Bronx, N. Y.; Owleyes, Brandon, Vt.; Otto Petke, Jersey City, N. J.; Phoney, San Pedro, Calif.; Piscator, Middletown, N. Y.; Nickle-Plate, Saranac Lake, N. Y.; W. F. Plette, Galesburg, Ill.; Porthos, Fall River, Mass.; \*Primrose, Baltimore, Md.; Qpkwins, Roxbury, Mass.; Ray Rasmussen, Chicago, Ill.; Isabel Revord, Hartford, Conn.;

Don Ricardo, New Orleans, La.; Mrs. Bruce Richardson, Saginaw, Mich.; Frank C. Ringer, Chicago, Ill.; \*Alvin Robb, London, Ontario, Canada; Charles L. Rohde, Baltimore, Md.; Frank Roman, Kansas City, Mo.; \*Mrs. Alice Routh, Oklahoma City, Okla.; Sachem, Hyattsville, Md.; Charles R. Schnerr, Waterbury, Conn.; Mrs. H. A. Seals, Cleveland, Ohio; O. I. See, Caroleen, N. C.; Sherlac, Philadelphia, Pa.; Alice M. Shott, Rickreall, Oreg.; \*Sleepy, Bryn Mawr, Pa.; \*G. A. Slight, Newburgh, N. Y.; \*A. W. Smith, Oklahoma City, Okla.; Mrs. Josephine Spalding, Arizona; Sam Spiegel, Butte, Mont.; Big Stack, Anaconda, Mont.; A. Onyx Starks, St. Louis, Mo.; \*Jack-Stay, Tucson, Ariz.; Hot Summers, Minneapolis, Minn.; \*Dick Tate, Battle Creek, Mich.; Texocron, New York, N. Y.; \*Old Timer, Guthrie, Okla.; Benj. A. Tress, Baskett, Ky.; Paw Tucket, Orlando, Fla.; Uuem, Dayton, Ohio; Viceroy, Aliquippa, Pa.; W. R. W., Chicago, Ill.; Waltraw, Detroit, Mich.; R. W. West, Passaic, N. J.; \*H. F. Wickner, Las Vegas, Nev.; Little Willy, Johnstown, Pa.; \*E. A. Wilson, Oakdale, Pa.; Sam Wilson, Chicago, Ill.; \*Doctor X, Kansas City, Mo.; L. J. Yanchus, Masontown, Pa.; Lew Zirn, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.; A. R. Zorn, Perris, Calif.

*Continued on Page 64*

# STAR BLADES

their keenness never varies



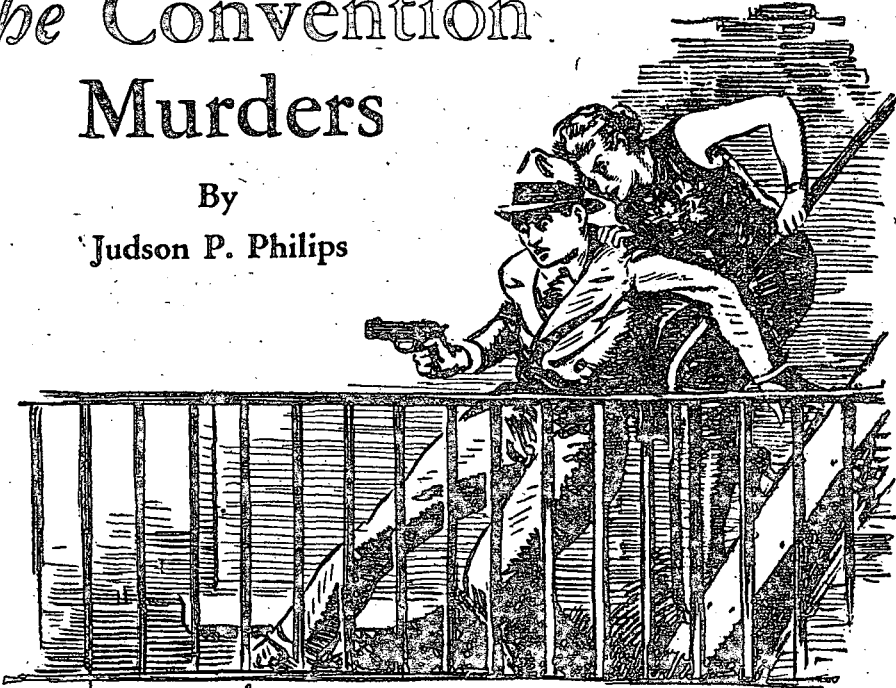
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**FIT GEM AND EVER-READY RAZORS**



# The Convention Murders

By  
Judson P. Philips



A flight lower, Patrick heard a cry, and a bullet whined over his shoulder

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*Like the Tightening Coils  
of a Giant Constrictor, the  
Deadly Embrace of Mr. Q's  
Murder Syndicate Presses  
Ever Closer Upon John  
Patrick and Linda Merriam*

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*What has happened—*

JOHN PATRICK, wealthy Washington private detective, begins an investigation of the mysterious murder of Clark Merriam, Bureau of Standards chemist, his fiancée's brother. Meanwhile, in Clayton City, a distant mid-western metropolis, Jeff Stone, a leader in the National Union Party, approaches Curly Price, a crooked local political boss, with plans for nominating and electing Price's tool, State Gov-

This story began in *Detective Fiction Weekly* for June 13

ernor James Bradley. A sinister Mr. Q is willing to spend millions backing a pliable President of the United States—to further a gigantic criminal plunder-plan. Henry Larsen, an attorney who can expose the scheme, is murdered by Black Glasses, Mr. Q's executioner, so that it looks like suicide. Judge Scott, Larsen's friend, head of the Independent Voters' League, knows it was murder. He tries to enlist John Patrick's aid.

Patrick refuses to quit the Merriam case, but is tricked into a meeting in Washington with Black Glasses, who summarizes all Patrick knows of the Merriam-Larsen murders, admits the Bradley nomination is involved, and admits also that he is the murderer. He warns Patrick that to know more means death, and orders him to go with Linda Merriam, his fiancée, on a long vacation.

Patrick and Linda pretend to do so, change places with Carmichel, one of Patrick's agents, and double back for Clayton City. Carmichel and his girl are slaughtered shortly thereafter in Miami. Patrick pays a midnight visit to Judge Scott, now also a rival candidate for the nomination. They decide that only one person—Mary Larsen, the widow of the murdered lawyer—can expose the mammoth swindle. But Black Glasses beats Patrick to her, spirits her away. When reporting to Mr. Q, he learns that the criminal master-mind is coming to Clayton City to direct operations in person.

Patrick, frantic to find a strong ally, goes to the Brown Jug Press Club, Price's stronghold, and confides in an old newspaper acquaintance, Dixie Leach. Leach suggests that he visit Doris Selby, Governor Bradley's mistress, a singer in a night club.

But Leach is actually in Mr. Q's pay. He phones Curly Price to trap Patrick at the club, and goes himself to kidnap Linda for personal profit. Doris Selby, however, having a strong hold on Bradley, decides, for reasons of her own, to buck the syndicate, and so warns Patrick. He barely es-

capades the death-trap which Black Glasses has planned.

Meanwhile Leach has arrived at Linda's apartment and tricked her into admitting him. She discovers the trick, but is disarmed before she can shoot—she has forgotten to release the safety catch on the gun.

Dixie Leach snatches the gun from her. He is desperately nervous. Just when his nerves are about to snap, there is the brittle sound of smashing glass in the back room. Somebody—undoubtedly an enemy—has entered.

Is it Patrick, supposedly at the night club? Or is it Black Glasses? Leach doesn't know. He pulls Linda in front of him as a shield, points his gun, bellows: "Come out of there! Come out!"

His only answer is brooding, pregnant silence. . .

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Patrick Springs a Death-Trap

JOHN PATRICK was in that darkened bedroom. He crouched in the darkness, so still he scarcely breathed—so still he could hear Leach gasping for breath as he leaned with his back to the door with Linda held rigidly in front of him as a shield.

In the last ten minutes John Patrick had taken bitter stock of himself and his actions in this strange case. Twice he had played the fool: once when he believed he could delude his enemies into thinking he was in Miami; again, only a short time ago when he had run the risk of confiding in that rat who was now waiting tensely in the next room for him to show himself. A sort of intense fury had governed his actions up to this moment. First he had

**T**HERE is no intention in this story to have any of the great American political parties identified with Black Glasses and Mr. Q; on the contrary, the political party that they appropriate for their own in this amazing novel is purely fictitious. It is nonetheless true, however, that what happens in this book could happen in real life; as a matter of fact, some of the very basis of Mr. Philips' serial has already happened—years ago—and could happen again.

—THE EDITOR.

set out to avenge Clark Merriam. Then Carmichel and his girl had been added to the list. Patrick had acted impulsively, without sufficient thought. The real key to his failure at this point lay in just one mistake. He had not believed that *anyone* involved in attempting to put over a delicate political maneuver would dare resort to the cold-blooded violence of these people.

There would be no more mistakes, though, if he lived to rectify this one. At this moment, Patrick's nerves were like ice. He knew that emotion must be sidetracked here. He had harshly shut his heart against it. Impulse would have sent him bounding into the next room, reckless of the fact that death waited for him, to snatch Linda from Leach's hold. But Patrick waited. Waited in dead silence. . . .

He had seen strange things in the last few minutes. He had seen that the house on Sycamore Street was surrounded. He had waited below, debating a dash for the front door—a hectic chance that he might survive the fire of those dark, waiting figures. The odds were too great. Then he had crept in the shadow toward the alley beside the house, thinking of the fire escape which led up to the bedroom window.

To his astonishment, he found that this alley was not guarded. But just as he entered it he heard a whistle . . . a low, long whistle. He stood rooted where he was, his gun in his hand. He saw one of those shadowy figures point toward the alley. Yet nobody came. They had meant to let him make his way up to the apartment.

*So the trap was there!*

Patrick had every idea, as he scrambled up the fire escape, that he was doing exactly what they wanted him to do. But there was ice in his veins now and an extraordinary clarity in his

brain. He would do what they wanted up to a point—and then perhaps things would not run according to schedule.

At last he was on the little landing outside the bedroom window. Gently he tried the window and found it still locked. He cupped his hands around his eyes and peered in through the glass.

He saw Leach! He saw Leach take the gun away from Linda. Then they disappeared from view. So Leach was alone! Everything in that action indicated that he was alone.

Patrick lifted his arm and covered his eyes. Then he jammed his shoulder against the window, went smashing through glass and frame into the darkened bedroom. Now he crouched beside the bed, his gun drawn. He could see Leach and Linda, could see Linda's terrified face. Mirthless laughter shook him as he heard Leach cry out: "Well, come on! Come on, damn you!"

Patrick moved, but it was with the silence of a jungle cat stalking its prey. He moved around the side of the bed toward the door. He stood, just around the corner of the door and waited patiently.

Sweat was running off Dixie Leach's face. He was in a dilemma. He couldn't tell whether Patrick could see him. If he lowered his right hand—in which he held the gun—and tried to open the door which was directly behind him, it would give Patrick the chance to act. If he used his left hand to open the door the girl would spring away from him. He would be no longer shielded by her and he hadn't the slightest doubt but that Patrick would step into the clear and shoot it out with him.

There was stark terror in his voice when he cried out: "Patrick! Listen!

"I'll let her go. I'll get out. I promise you!"

Silence . . .

"All right, I double-crossed you!" Leach shouted. "But I'm nothing in this game. I'll talk. I'll do anything you say."

Talk? Patrick's smile was thin and sharp as a knife blade. And afterward that ring of men downstairs would make that talking useless. He stood where he was, not moving a muscle.

Something snapped in Dixie Leach's head about then. Panic, hysteria, bravado all fought for the upper hand.

"All right, Patrick! It's your funeral. I'm coming after you. I am keeping Miss Merriam in front of me. If you try to shoot, before God I'll blow her brains out." He began moving toward the bedroom, forcing Linda ahead of him.

Cold and motionless as a stone figure, Patrick stood where he was. He had counted on this. He had counted on panic bringing Leach into the bedroom. He wanted no shooting just yet if he could help it. He wanted Linda safe first. He was counting to a hair Leach's desperation. Leach had betrayed him. Leach had meant to betray Linda to the enemy. But Leach was not a killer. He was just a rat who had sold his integrity for money. Patrick was counting on that fact. Counting on the certainty that he would never shoot Linda in cold blood. He might rat, he might squeal, he might double-cross—but Leach was not a killer . . .

**T**ERROR brought Leach on and on across the room toward the door. That terrible silence—the uncertainty as to whether it was Patrick who waited in the darkness—the uncertainty as to whether *anyone*

waited. He was almost at the door now.

"Before God, Patrick, I'll kill her if you shoot!" Saliva drooled down from the corner of Leach's working mouth.

They were at the door now. Linda's body was actually over the threshold. The faint familiar perfume she used came to Patrick. Leach was gasping for breath, a sob at his throat. And then he too took the step over the threshold.

"Now, Patrick! Shoot if you want! But it'll be the end for her. It'll be the end for—"

It all happened very quickly. Patrick's left hand yanked at Leach's gun arm. His right went up and came down savagely, and the butt of his own automatic smashed down upon Leach's skull.

Linda staggered away as the newspaper man fell without a sound. Then Patrick had her in his arms.

"You've got to hang on, darling," he whispered. "We're not out of the woods yet."

LINDA clung to him, shaking. He sensed the danger of collapse. It had all been more than he dared expect her to endure. His fingers gripped her arms painfully.

"Linda! This place is surrounded by men. They're going to be waiting for us to come out. Do you understand? We're still very deep in the woods—one chance in ten of getting out. You've got to hold on with everything you've got."

He felt her stiffen. "I—I'll do, Pat," she said. "Just knowing that you're safe . . . just knowing if it has to happen I'll be with you!"

Patrick's eyes were hard, glittering. "I don't quite get the picture of this, Linda. Why did they send him up

alone? Why that risk? Why in God's name did they let me up here when they knew he was alone? They must have known I'd get him!"

"Is—is he dead?" Linda asked, keeping her eyes averted from the fallen man.

"We won't worry about that," said Patrick grimly. "It was coming to him."

"Is it murder, Pat, to kill a man who . . ."

"Linda!" Patrick's voice cracked sharply. "Murder! That's it. They wanted me to kill him! He must have double-crossed them too. They're waiting now for the sound of shots. Then they'll come running. God! Don't you see? That would be a legitimate excuse for getting me out of the way without any bad smell attached to the governor."

"Pat, I don't understand. Do you mean . . ."

"I mean we're going to play along with them, Linda. Now listen. I'm going to shoot off my gun. Then be ready to move quickly—fire escape."

He raised his gun and it thundered through the silence of the night . . .

twice, three times. Almost at once, there was the shrill blast from a police whistle from the street below. Patrick sprang through the living room and locked the front door once more.

"Hurry!" Linda pleaded.

Already they could hear feet thundering up the stairs. Patrick delayed until the very last minute—till heavy fists were pounding on the door. He wanted them all up there—all of them.

"Now!" he said.

They went out through the smashed window onto the fire escape landing. Patrick led the way, Linda behind him with her hand on his shoulder. They clambered down one flight before Pat-

rick heard a startled cry from below. There was a sharp report, a tongue of flame in the night, and a bullet whined over Patrick's shoulder. There was a guard in the alley below now. Patrick fired back . . . straight at that tongue of flame. There was no help for it. And for just a moment, a fierce satisfaction swept over him. This encounter was first blood for them. When they reached the alley they had to step over the body of the man who lay so still. Patrick's aim had been deadly.

They were running now, not toward the street but toward the rear. A high board fence . . . Patrick sprang to the top of it, pulled Linda after him. . . . Down the other side, stumbling through a back yard filled with old tin cans. . . . Laundry hanging from a line in their faces, a dog barking in shrill alarm.

Now they had reached a back street. A boy and girl sat in the front seat of a little sedan, heads close together, lights dimmed. Patrick yanked open the door of the sedan and literally pushed Linda into it. The steel of his gun was cold against the neck of the startled youth.

"Drive!" ordered Patrick, between his teeth. "And drive like hell!"

## CHAPTER XIX

### The Man who Didn't Die

ONCE the frightened boy got the car going, Patrick removed the menacing gun from the back of his head and attempted to calm him a bit. He explained briefly that a "gang" was after him, that he meant to seek shelter at the home of Judge Scott. The youngsters, assured that the man who had commandeered their car meant them no harm, entered into the spirit of the thing. Behind them they

could hear the distant wailing of a police siren.

"You're to stop for nothing!" said Patrick. "I'll fix up any traffic jams you get in!" He knew that siren was on a police car hunting for *him*. But it looked as though they had got the jump on their pursuers. With the judge's house only a block away, Patrick gave curt orders.

"Don't even stop your car when you drive in. We'll jump for it while it's still moving," he said. He slipped something in the boy's breast pocket. "And you and your girl have a spree on me," he said. It was a fifty-dollar bill.

The judge's house loomed up in front of them. Patrick's keen eyes were looking for the men he had seen watching the judge's house earlier that evening. They were nowhere in sight. What did surprise him was the sight of lights in the judge's house, both upstairs and down.

The car was slowing down at the door. Patrick swung out on the running board, lent a hand to Linda, and a second later they were at the front door.

"Good luck!" shouted the boy, and drove on.

"The bell!" Patrick snapped at Linda. He had placed himself in a protecting position behind her, his gun drawn, looking for trouble from outside. The watchers were nowhere in sight. It occurred to Patrick they might have been called off to help handle the Sycamore Street business. There would not be too many men Black Glasses would care to trust with such a job.

Then the front door was opened.

"Patrick!" It was Judge Scott, his huge figure swathed in a dressing gown, a gun in his right hand. Over his shoulder, Patrick saw two women

whom he took to be Mrs. Scott and the judge's daughter, Margo. For the first time in what seemed hours Patrick drew a long breath as the heavy oak front door closed behind him.

The judge introduced his wife and daughter. Quickly Patrick explained what had happened.

"I don't think we're placing you in any danger coming here," he said earnestly to Mrs. Scott. "They won't dare make any kind of an attack on your house. That would hurt Governor Bradley's chances too much. They may take pot shots at us outside, but this house is safe. I *had* to bring Miss Merriam here."

"Of course," said Mrs. Scott coolly. "If I'd known how to reach you, I should have urged it before." She looked at her husband. "We've been having our own excitement, Mr. Patrick. I think Gerald will want to tell you about it. If you'll come with us, Miss Merriam?"

"You must get some rest, darling. It's been pretty tough," Patrick said gently. "And you've been swell. I'm proud of you."

"And you need rest, too, Pat!"

He realized that his eyes were stinging and hot with fatigue. But the look on the judge's face told him this was not the time for it.

"Later, darling." As he watched her go upstairs with the women, a great wave of relief swept over him.

The judge's voice boomed in his ears. "There's a man in my study. A man you must talk to. We may be getting a break, Patrick!"

The spring was gone from Patrick's step as he followed the judge. He was dog-tired — exhausted, more from nervous strain than anything else. He knew that he was alive because of a woman's whim. It had pleased Doris

Selby to warn him of his danger, the Lord knew why. Miss Selby was not one to do anything for nothing. Some day he knew he would have to repay that debt, and he wondered rather grimly what form the payment would take.

**B**UT his thoughts were interrupted rudely as they stepped in the judge's study and he was confronted by a man sitting in the big leather armchair. Perhaps it would have been more apt to describe him as the wreck of a man. There was a rather dirty-looking bandage around his face. The whole right side of his face looked like raw meat. His right arm hung limply at his side, and there was a slant to his shoulder that suggested a fractured collar bone. His clothes were torn and dirty.

"Sergeant Wilshire of the local police!" said the judge grimly.

"God, man, what's happened to you?" Patrick exclaimed. "You look as if you'd been run through a chopper."

The man's lips moved and he spoke from the corner of his mouth. "I was taken for a ride!" he said shortly.

Patrick sat on the edge of the judge's big flat-topped desk and lit a cigarette. The tobacco was soothing to his jaded nerves. He looked questioningly at the judge.

"Wilshire was on the Larsen case," said Scott, in a harsh voice. "He didn't see quite eye to eye with the chief of detectives and this was the result. They took him out on the turnpike, shot him, and dumped him over a hundred-foot rock embankment. It's a miracle the shot missed a vital spot. It's a triple miracle he wasn't killed by the fall. He lay at the bottom of the cliff for more than a day before he had strength

enough to move. Then some track-walkers picked him up and took care of him. He kept his mouth shut and they took him for a crook on the lam. Apparently they—our charming friends—think he's lying dead at the bottom of the cliff. They haven't even bothered to look for his body. As soon as he had strength enough to make it he came here, which happened to be about an hour ago."

Patrick felt his vitality reviving somewhat. This might indeed be a break. "So you didn't agree with the detective in charge, Wilshire?"

"The whole thing was screwy," said the injured policeman. "Oh, on the face of it it was suicide all right! Gun in his hand, note, all that. But there were things—other things—that made me wonder."

"What sort of things?" asked Patrick quickly.

"Well, I asks myself, why should a man like Henry Larsen burn the serial number off his gun with acid? He wasn't a crook. That's kind of funny."

"Very funny indeed," said Patrick. "What else?"

"Then Mrs. Larsen claimed she didn't hear no shot. Now the walls was pretty solid, but they wasn't sound-proof. So I thinks to myself, maybe there was a silencer on the gun. I mean when it was fired! I looked at the gun, and sure enough you could see marks where a silencer had been fitted on the barrel. But there wasn't no silencer anywhere there."

"Go on," said Patrick.

"There wasn't no powder marks on Larsen's forehead. I figured if he shot himself there'd *have* to be powder marks. Then there was the note."

"What about it?"

"Well, everybody knew how Henry Larsen loved his family," said Wil-

shire. "But the note he leaves when he bumps himself off! It just says: 'I can't stand the weight of my debts.' That's a hell of a leave-taking for a guy, now, isn't it?"

Patrick lit a fresh cigarette from the stub of the one he'd been smoking. "What got you in wrong with your chief?" he asked.

Wilshire shrugged. "The gun," he said. "'Larsen was no crook,' I says to Gault. He's the Chief Inspector. 'It looks funny, the serial number bein' burnt off his gun,' I says. 'Why should he do such a thing?' I says. 'He probably didn't,' says Gault. 'He probably bought it in a hock shop. It might of belonged to some crook before,' he says. 'But his wife says he didn't own no gun,' I says. 'Wives don't know everything,' he says. 'About her not hearin' the shot?' I says. 'And the marks of the silencer on the barrel?' I says." Wilshire paused to moisten his cracked lips.

"Then Gault got real tough. He says, 'This case is an open-and-shut suicide,' he says. 'If you go messin' around, tryin' to make something out of it you'll have people sayin' it was a political murder. So if you know which side your bread is buttered on, Wilshire, you'll keep your mouth shut.'" Wilshire shrugged. "It looked like murder to me and I said so. I figured somebody'd plugged him and then made it look like suicide. I kept sayin' so—and I guess I'm lucky to be alive."

Patrick looked at the judge. "You see the danger they're in, Judge?" he said, his eyes very bright. "Publicity of an unpleasant kind, whispers, rumors... they can't stand that. Bradley's none too secure. That Larsen business *had* to be suicide. But they've made a mistake. They let Wilshire get away from them." He gave the bat-

tered cop a sudden sharp look. "What day was it they took you for your ride?"

"Last Thursday."

PATRICK slapped his thigh. "That was the day I met friend Black Glasses in Washington. A lucky thing for you, Wilshire! Black Glasses doesn't make mistakes. I got away to-night because he was looking for me somewhere else. If he'd been in charge at Sycamore Street..." He shrugged his shoulders expressively.

"But how will this help us?" asked the judge. "It confirms what we already suspected. But it's not evidence. If Wilshire accuses the police department of taking him for a ride he'd be laughed out of court. And charges we make that we can't *prove* will act as a boomerang in Bradley's favor."

Patrick looked thoughtfully at Wilshire. "Tell me why you came here to the judge's house tonight?"

There was a hard glitter in Wilshire's eyes. "Because I aim to get even," he said slowly. "I knew the judge was an enemy of the governor. I know Gault, and all those other crooked buzzards on the force are Price's men... which is the same thing as saying the governor's men."

Patrick flicked the ash from his cigarette in an impatient gesture. "We know all that. But you must have had something particular in mind."

Wilshire moistened his lips. "If you could prove Henry Larsen was murdered, it would make things pretty tough for the governor, wouldn't it? He wouldn't stand much chance of bein' President, would he?"

"Good God, man, *can* you prove it?" Patrick demanded sharply.

"Listen," said Wilshire. He leaned forward, lowering his voice. "There's

no doubt that Larsen was killed with the gun he had in his hand. They had a ballistics expert to prove that. 'Not a shadow of a doubt,' he said. But if you could prove that gun belonged to somebody else—what then?"

"Then we could demand a very thorough investigation!" snapped Judge Scott. "But how are we to prove it?"

"We might have some luck if we could gain possession of the gun," said Patrick. "By Jove . . ." He looked at the judge, his eyes bright with excitement. "It's a long shot—a terribly long shot, Judge—but do you realize that there's just a chance that's the same gun that was used to kill Clark Merriam? If we could get hold of it and ship it to my friend in Washington—make tests to compare its riflings with the riflings on the slugs from Merriam's body . . ."

"Well, you can't get hold of it," said the judge grimly. "It's locked up at police headquarters, no doubt, and you'd have to produce more than a hunch to get a court order for the police to turn it over to you. And a court order's the only way you'll get it."

"Maybe not." Patrick and Scott both looked at Wilshire, who had spoken those two words.

"That's where I come in," said Wilshire. "That gun ain't at police headquarters, Judge Scott! I know that. Inspector Gault has it at his own house! He wasn't runnin' the risk of anything happenin' to it . . . and there's no tellin' at headquarters who is playin' ball for who!"

"At his house?"

"That's right."

"That," said Patrick, "is something else again. I think a little call upon Inspector Gault is indicated."

"You don't think he'll turn the gun over to you, do you?" said Scott.

Patrick smiled grimly. "I'm not going to ask him, Judge. I'm just going to take it!"

## CHAPTER XX

### Evidence

THE next hour was never very clear to Patrick in retrospect.

Somehow, when he came to pull himself together to go out once again into that night, something gave inside him. His nerves, his body, were bordering on complete exhaustion. Behind him were a great many hours of tension which had begun five days before when he had first been dragged into the case by Linda. Since that moment there had not been an instant's let-up. He had worked diligently on the Merriam case—then his meeting with Black Glasses—then two days of cross country driving by car—and then this night! In the last two hours he had flirted with death so diligently that there was no strength left.

"Wait till tomorrow night," he remembered the judge urging him. "You must have rest."

"It'll be daylight in an hour," Wilshire said. "It's too dangerous."

But Patrick knew there could be no more delay. To wait till tomorrow night meant twenty-four hours. For just this night—for just this hour—they had the enemy off balance. The failure to trap Patrick at the night club and later at Sycamore Street were the first slips the enemy had made. Everything had been smooth as grease up to now. While they were slightly disorganized was the time to strike again. Patrick sensed that . . . knew that he had to go on.

"I'm going to get that gun and the

bullet!" he said. His eyes were burning with the fever of fatigue. "It'll be up to you, Judge Scott, to find a safe way to get it to Washington."

"I'll find a way!" the judge boomed.

It was after that that things became a little hazy to Patrick. He remembered Wilshire writing the address of Inspector Gault, Chief of Detectives, on the back of an envelope and describing how to get there. He remembered the judge taking him out to the garage and turning over Margo Scott's little roadster to him. He remembered driving through the damp darkness, remembered fighting off sleep that swept over him in nauseous waves as he concentrated on the beam of light that the car projected along the macadam street.

He had driven by the Inspector's house once and noted that it was in complete darkness. Then he had parked the car on a side street a couple of blocks away. His legs were still and sore as he climbed out. His fingers were numb as he fumbled clumsily with the gun in the holster under his arm and transferred it to his coat pocket.

Then, with a faint gray light already visible in the east, he crossed the dew-soaked grass to a side window of the Inspector's house. Wilshire had told him a lot of things about the house—things that were spinning around confusedly in his head as he fumbled at the window. There was no burglar alarms. The Inspector lived alone, was a bachelor. A cleaning woman came in by the day and did his housework, got his breakfast. There would be no one in the house now but Gault.

Slowly, slowly, Patrick forced the window up and finally dragged his aching body over the sill into the house. This was the living room. There was a big upholstered couch standing in

front of a fireplace. Patrick remembered that he had a mad, hysterical desire to stretch out on those soft cushions and sleep . . . sleep. He gritted his teeth—bit his lower lip savagely. If Wilshire was right, there was a little study next door to this room. The Inspector's desk was there and the chances were the gun was kept in one of its drawers.

QUIETLY Patrick made his way back to that room, closed the door behind him, and went to work on the desk. There were papers—endless papers, trinkets, photographs, pipes, handcuffs, tools. but there was no gun.

Patrick felt something almost like tears well up into his eyes. He had so hoped he would find what he wanted and be able to slip away without more difficulties. But there was nothing for it now except to face his man and force him to turn over the gun.

Patrick dragged himself slowly up the stairs toward the second floor, his automatic ready for action. As he neared the top he could hear the heavy, adenoidal breathing of a man. He followed that sound to the open door of a bedroom. There was Gault, asleep on his bed. Patrick crossed the room and stood looking down at the Inspector—a gross, unshaven face, mouth open, eyes closed on a none-too-clean-looking pillow.

Patrick jabbed his gun in the Inspector's stomach.

Gault sat up quickly, made a dive toward his pillow.

"That would be a mistake," Patrick said. He reached under the pillow and and removed the Inspector's gun.

The Inspector looked at him, first angrily. Then a flicker of fear swept across his eyes. Afterwards, when Pat-

rick got a glimpse of himself in the mirror he didn't wonder. He was a pretty frightening spectacle—face haggard, bloodshot, burning eyes sunk deep in their sockets.

"I want the gun—Larsen's gun!" Patrick said between lips that felt dry, cracking.

"Don't be crazy, man! Who are you?" Then Gault drew in his breath sharply. "Patrick!"

"Listen," said Patrick wearily. "I want that gun. If I don't get it I'm going to kill you. I'm too tired to argue with you or bargain with you, Gault. Do I get it?"

"You wouldn't dare kill me!" Gault said, as if he were trying to convince himself of it.

"Oh, I'd dare all right," said Patrick, in that dull, exhaust voice. "You and your friends have killed three friends of mine, plus Henry Larsen, plus trying to get me. I'd dare all right, Gault. If I wasn't so tired it would be a positive pleasure. And I'm too tired to wait. Do I get it?"

"But the gun isn't here! It's at headquarters! Why should I have it here? I couldn't give it to you if I wanted to because it's at—"

"Nuts!" said Patrick, without emotion. "Your boys did a bad job on a man named Wilshire. I tell you that just so you'll know I know you're bluffing. It's up to you to decide, Gault. Either you get the gun for me right now, or I kill you and hunt for it at my leisure. Please believe me, my dear man, I'm not trying to frighten you. I'm just stating a fact! Do I get it?"

Patrick had to struggle to hold his eyes steady as Gault gave him a searching stare. The Inspector saw before him a man who was too tired to care—a man who would pull the trigger of

his automatic out of sheer weariness without considering consequences. Gault made his decision.

"You get it," he said grimly.

**E**VEN what happened then was vague to Patrick when he tried to recall it the next day. Gault got out of bed. Patrick remembered thinking it was rather comic . . . a hard-boiled cop in an old-fashioned nightshirt! Gault paddled downstairs in his bare feet to the study, with Patrick behind him—close enough to give him an occasional jab in the small of his back with the gun.

They were back in the study again. Gault knelt before the desk and with agile fingers located a secret drawer which had eluded Patrick. There was a gun in it—a gun with the serial number burned off by acid. There was an envelope with a bullet in it—the bullet that had been dug out of Henry Larsen's brain.

"You can't get away with this," Gault said, as he put the gun and the envelope down on the desk.

"Can and will," said Patrick, rather thickly. "You'll head for that coat-closet I noticed near the front door."

"This is too big a game for you to buck, Patrick," said Gault, as he backed toward the coat-closet.

"I know," said Patrick. "Open the coat-closet door."

Gault opened the door and Patrick gave him a little shove into the closet. "Your cleaning woman will let you out in the morning."

Gault was hammering frantically on a locked door when Patrick stepped out into the gray light of dawn.

It seemed something of a miracle to him when he found Judge Scott and Wilshire waiting at his car. They had come to look for him. The judge's

limousine was drawn up beside it. The judge had located a nephew of his who flew his own plane. The young man was already at the airport, ready to take the evidence to Washington.

The judge's chauffeur drove the roadster home. The judge drove the limousine to the airport. Patrick actually slept in the back seat. They had to shake him fiercely when they got to the airport. Somehow he pulled himself together enough to write a brief note to Red Kennedy. He remembered hearing the roar of the plane's motor, seeing it sweep up into the gray sky.

The judge's arm was tight around his shoulders.

"Hold on, old man. We'll be home in a jiffy. Then you can sleep."

Sleep!

He never did remember getting to bed . . .

## CHAPTER XXI

### Meet Mr. Q

WHILE Patrick slept, and while a little private plane shot through the skies like a gray arrow toward Washington, other things were happening. A huge private tri-motor cabin plane had landed at a spot about fifty miles from Clayton City. The door had been flung open by a steward in a short white mess-jacket. A limousine, with curtains drawn, had driven up out of a little wooded road. A chauffeur and a man in a dark blue suit with suspicious-looking bulges under both arms had got out of the car. Everyone seemed to wait expectantly.

Out of the plane stepped a man . . . a tall man, with stooped shoulders. He wore a wide-brimmed, black felt hat. He moved with a certain grace—a certain dash. A flowing black opera cape

seemed to become him, to make his movements seem more fluid. He spoke to the steward, and his voice had a curious hollow sound.

"You will take off at once!"

"Yes, sir."

He strode quickly across the intervening space to the car and disappeared into its curtained interior. The chauffeur and the man with the guns got back onto the front seat and the car sped away at a great rate of speed.

In something under an hour, it traversed the fifty miles to Clayton City, swept up to the tradesmen's entrance of the best hotel. The chauffeur and the man with the guns walked with the passenger through a dark cellarway to a freight elevator. Up twenty-six flights to a penthouse apartment they rode. The tall, stoop-shouldered man kept his chin buried in the folds of his cape. At last they reached the door of the penthouse. It was swung open before the man could rap on it with bony knuckles. An impassive-faced servant—a little man who looked like a Filipino—stood back to let the man pass. The chauffeur and the man with the guns remained outside.

"Mr. Stone wait in living room," the servant announced.

"Luncheon?" queried the man with the hollow voice.

"It is served."

Through a swinging door into the main part of the apartment the man with the cape made his way. It was a charming room into which he went. There were windows on four sides of it. There were flowers—heavily scented carnations and lilies—in vases about the room. In the center of the room stood a table, set with a fine linen cloth, exquisite silver. There was a little lacquer bowl in the center of the table in which floated several blood-

red Japanese poppies. A glass of tomato juice was packed in a bowl of ice at the one place which was set at the table.

Jeff Stone turned as the man entered the room. He had been standing at one of the windows looking out over the city. His face was cold, wintry as ever, yet there was an air of respect about him. The newcomer took off his cloak with a sort of flourish and draped it over a chair. His hat followed. He stood looking at Stone in silence.

It was an extraordinary face. The man was probably in his late fifties. His face must have at one time been very handsome. There were the remnants of great physical beauty; the shape of the head, the outline of the profile were still good. But the jowls had sagged. There were dark pouches under jade-green eyes of brilliant intensity; the ears were pointed—almost faun-like. "A Greek god decayed by dissipation," thought Jeff Stone.

"Well, Stone?" There was a sardonic twist to the lips.

"Well, Mr. Q?" said Stone coolly.

Mr. Q sat down at the place set for him at the table. He rapped sharply with his knuckles on the cloth. Immediately the Filipino appeared, carrying a small liquor glass in his hand. Q took the glass of tomato juice from its bed of ice and poured a portion of it into the liquor glass. The jade-green eyes were fixed sharply on the Filipino as the servant raised the liquor glass to his lips and drank.

Q nodded and drank the remainder of the tomato juice. "I trust nobody," he said, in a conversational tone, to Stone, "least of all my cook, who holds my life in his hands. Poison is so easily administered by a clever hand."

"You ought to know," said Jeff Stone quietly.

The sardonic lips smiled, but there was no mirth in the jade-green eyes. "While I eat, you will talk," Mr. Q commanded.

A small filet of sole with a lemon-butter sauce was produced, tasted by the servant, and then placed before Mr. Q.

"From a political point of view, things are going very smoothly," said Jeff Stone. "As you know, we have our agents working on the delegates all over the country. It is costing us a great deal of money, but I think it is safe to say that a majority of the delegates who will convene here next week are ready to play ball. We have lifted mortgages on homes; we have furthered the projects of local politicians; we have done a great many favors here and there. When the time comes, they will undoubtedly string with us."

"Good," said Mr. Q.

"As you know, aside from a few radio speeches, Bradley is making no political moves. We are saving everything for a big splurge at the convention—and it will come off unless something startling is produced against Bradley, something that will make it impossible for the delegates to vote for him in the face of changed public opinion."

"And is there a chance of that?" asked Q, sharply.

STONE took a cigarette from his pocket and lit it. "There is a chance," he said. "Things have been going anything but smoothly in the last twenty-four hours. This man Patrick . . ."

Mr. Q was carefully watching the Filipino taste a bit of filet mignon and the wine-flavored mushroom sauce that went with it. Stone waited.

"What about Patrick?" said Q, finally satisfied.

"It would have been better," said Stone quietly, "if he had been killed in Washington. He is inquisitive, daring, and he guesses at too many truths."

"And what truths has he guessed at? He was told that Henry Larsen was murdered . . . he was told that Merriam was killed because he had some connection with this. Has he guessed even close to what that connection is?"

"I don't think he has the faintest notion of it." Stone blew a spiral of smoke toward the ceiling. "But we are balancing on a very delicate wire, Mr. Q. It was safe enough to tell him these things in Washington. He could not prove that conversation he had. We didn't care very much whether he made a public statement about it. It could have been laughed off—even turned to our advantage. But he has gone further. Early this morning he stole the gun and the bullet that brought about Larsen's death. He will no doubt manage to get them to Washington. They will be compared with the bullets taken from Merriam's body—and they will check!"

"Can the gun be traced . . . its ownership?"

"No!" said Stone, positively.

Q shrugged. "Then what is there to fear? They check, so the implication is simply that it was Larsen who killed Clark Merriam. That does them no good. We could secure witnesses to prove that Larsen was in Washington at the time of Merriam's death, couldn't we?"

Stone smiled very faintly. "He wasn't there, but we can find plenty of witnesses to say he was."

"Then we need not fear that," said Mr. Q. He was sharply watching the

servant sample the coffee that had been brought in a little silver pot.

Stone looked grim. "In the beginning there were just two people we had to fear—Merriam and Larsen. Then Patrick appeared on the scene. His presence has disrupted things. Last night we had him trapped. He escaped due to help he received from Doris Selby—and later due to his own cleverness. He managed to steal that gun from Gault. I admit that none of these things may be disastrous . . . but who knows how much further he will get?"

Mr. Q took a long Russian cigarette from a silver case he carried and lit it. The sardonic expression of his face, the sharpness of those jade-green eyes, the pointed faun-like ears—all served to heighten the sinister effect created emphasized by his peculiar, hollow voice.

"Stone, there is only one person who can destroy us," he said. "That person is Mrs. Henry Larsen. If she were to tell what she knew . . . *poof!* the show would be over. She is not dead because we dare not place ourselves in the position of being unable to produce her if pointed inquiries are made. But she will not talk! I am right in thinking we have made certain of that?"

"Yes."

"Then we have got to play our hand with care, Stone. Great Scott, we can't sweep this fool into the White House on a trail of blood. There has been killing enough—dangerously enough. If you had got a trick last night, well and good. But having bungled it you must be careful. Too many people know about it. Watch him like a hawk. If he gets to know one fact that will lead him to the truth, then you must strike him down, no matter what the

cost. Even should we fail to have the Governor nominated, our secret must not be known. We could manage again later to use it. The Selby woman must be watched. This safety-deposit box of hers must be found and its contents destroyed. Remember, Stone, killings are dangerous for us—but if they are necessary there must be no more bungling."

"Quite so," Stone agreed dryly. "Quite so."

Mr. Q suddenly brought his fist sharply down on the table. "Do you realize that once we have that numbskull in the White House, Stone, we will suddenly have not just this country but the whole world in the palm of our hand?" Then he smiled bitterly. "But was ever so magnificent a scheme dependent upon the success of such a fool as Bradley? If only we had dared trust a clever man, it would have been so easy, eh?"

"Very easy indeed."

"But we shall put it over!" said Q grimly. "And once we have succeeded, then we will silence these menacing insects forever. . . . Patrick, Mrs. Larsen, the Merriam girl, the Judge. Then—" there was a fanatical light in the jade-green eyes—"then we shall have the world by the tail! Then these petty presidents, and kings, these loud-mouthed dictators—they will come crawling to us."

Stone nodded, gray eyes glittering.

Q laughed. "And the simple beauty of it, Stone. Once our fat-headed friend is in the White House he will have to do nothing illegal! There is no trap into which he can fall then. And while the American people will be singing his praises as a great and brilliant economist, he will have betrayed them and the rest of the world into our hands. *And he won't even*

*know it himself!* What a gigantic joke!"

## CHAPTER XXII

### Squeeze-Play

PATRICK still slept, but the machinery he had set in motion moved on. The little gray plane had landed in Washington.

Even as Mr. Q and Jeff Stone held their conference, the judge's nephew, a red-haired youth with plenty of the judge's own fighting qualities, stood in John Patrick's office in Washington talking to another red head . . . Kennedy, the one-armed ex-G-man. Kennedy was reading Patrick's scrawled note.

"Looks like he was drunk when he wrote it," he said to young Scott.

"He was asleep," said the boy, with a grin. "Never saw anybody so all in. But what a guy!"

Kennedy looked up with a warm smile. "He'll do," he said. The note was brief and explicit.

Have Joe Herrick check these with Merriam slugs. You must find out what Clark Merriam was working at—in detail! Convinced that is key to whole affair. Have the bearer wait and bring you back to Clayton City when you know! No other means of communication to be trusted.

—PATRICK.

"Can you fly at night?" Kennedy asked sharply.

Young Scott grinned again. "I can fly inside a barrel, blindfolded, with my hands and feet tied, and—"

"Be ready for me at the flying field," Kennedy cut in grimly. "I don't know what time I'll get there, but when I do, I expect to be in the air in five minutes."

"Make it three," said young Scott. Half an hour later, Red Kennedy

was closeted in secret with Colonel Frazer, Chief of the Bureau of Standards. The Colonel, a mild-mannered little man with horn-rimmed spectacles, sat behind a big desk, his fingertips pressed together, listening to the detectives.

Kennedy's job was not an easy one. He dare not say too much, for Frazer himself might not be a person he could trust. No one could be trusted at the moment. Yet the Colonel had a very fine reputation.

"I knew that Mr. Patrick was working on Merriam's murder," he said. "Fact is, he made some inquiries here himself a week or so ago."

"I know," said Kennedy. "And he had no luck. However, as the case progresses, Colonel, it becomes more and more certain that the motive behind that murder had something to do with Merriam's work. It is vital that we should know exactly what it was."

"Rather complicated situation, Kennedy," the Colonel said. "Merriam was a brilliant chap—very brilliant. We gave him more or less of a free hand here. He was an expert on petroleum products."

"I know."

"Perhaps you don't know," said the Colonel, readjusting his spectacles, "that there is a society here in Washington known as the Society for Petroleum Research."

"Never heard of it."

"It is not a government body," the Colonel continued, "but its members—it is really a sort of glorified committee—all have political connections. It is headed by Senator Austin Graves. As you know he is the chief figure in the oil lobby."

"I recall that he was on the committee that investigated the Teapot Dome scandal," said Kennedy.

"Right. What I am getting at is this. Whenever any new patents or any other discoveries requiring expert opinion were brought up before the Society they called upon Clark Merriam to pass on them. For nearly a year he had been working almost constantly for Senator Graves. If any man can tell you what he was working at, it would be the Senator. However, as an employee of the Bureau, any work of a creative nature that Merriam did belonged to us."

"Which means?"

"Which means that if he was murdered in order to steal some invention, as you suggest, it was a very stupid business. The minute that invention was put into use the thief would be prosecuted, for he would, in fact, have stolen from the government."

"But if you don't know what he was working at . . . how would you detect the theft?"

"Graves would know," said the Colonel. "The Society would know. It is their job to see to it that no one big company uses any unfair means to compete with the smaller companies. Graves is your man, Kennedy. He can tell you all there is to know."

"THAT, my dear sir, is preposterous!" said Senator Austin Graves, in a deep, sonorous voice. He was a handsome figure of a man in his cutaway and striped trousers, and the meticulous black tie and wing collar. "There was nothing secret about Merriam's work, I can assure you."

Red Kennedy's shrewd eyes were fixed on the Senator's florid face. "None the less, I should like to know exactly what the nature of his work was," he said.

The Senator shrugged. "Why

not?" He pressed a button on his desk and his secretary appeared. "I should like all the files on Clark Merriam's work for the past year, Miss Withington. Also, I believe there is a batch of papers relating to unfinished experiments he was working on at the time of his death. Bring those as well."

Red Kennedy shifted in his chair. "While we are waiting, Senator, will you tell me something about this Society for Petroleum Research—its purposes, all that sort of thing?"

"It's very simple," said Graves, rubbing one side of his nose with his index finger. "We keep ourselves thoroughly informed on all matters pertaining to the oil business and its by-products. We issue a monthly bulletin to all the people in the oil business, keeping them informed on new inventions, new discoveries, engineering reports, market prices here and abroad—that sort of thing. Our real purpose is to keep large interests from getting the jump on smaller concerns by reason of their more complex organizations and greater wealth. We also act as a sort of arbitration board in the case of disputes, and serve in an advisory capacity to the government."

"Who are the members of the society?" Kennedy asked.

The Senator opened a desk drawer and took out a small folder. "You will find the names all listed here. They embrace experts, engineers, business men, members of the government."

Kennedy glanced through the list. Some of the names he knew, some he didn't, but everything seemed to be in order. Just then the secretary came in with a mass of papers which she put down on the desk.

"You may looked over them yourself, Mr. Kennedy," said the Senator.

"You will see that there is nothing of a secret nature here."

Most of it was Greek to Kennedy. When he got down to the papers which actually represented Merriam's experiments he was completely at sea. As he lifted one of them he came upon a folder, apparently a duplicate of the one the Senator had just shown him. Idly he started to open it. The Senator acted very peculiarly. He reached forward as if he meant to snatch it out of Kennedy's hands—and missed. It was very awkward and embarrassing.

"An old copy," the Senator explained, flustered. "The one I showed you a moment ago is up to date."

Something clicked in Kennedy's brain. For some reason he hadn't been meant to see this. He opened the folder. The list of names was identical, it seemed—yet one name had been inked out toward the bottom of the page. Senator Graves was biting his lip as Kennedy held the page up to the light.

Kennedy's heart began to pound against his ribs as the inked out name became clear to him:

HENRY LARSEN

Kennedy kept his voice quite steady. "Larsen was a member, eh? Wasn't he the lawyer chap from Clayton City who blew out his brains?"

"Yes . . . yes! Tragic affair. Very tragic," the Senator said hastily. "You had a new folder made after his death?"

"Yes. Yes, we had to, of course."

Kennedy's eyes were suddenly cold, penetrating. "But that new folder is dated some two weeks before Larsen killed himself, Senator."

There were little beads of sweat on Graves' forehead. He moistened dry

lips with the tip of his tongue. Kennedy was wondering why all this excitement? He had hit on something, but what?

"Well, as a matter of fact," the Senator said, "Larsen dropped out of the society about a month before he died."

"Why?" That single word dropped from Kennedy's lips like an icicle.

The Senator squirmed in his chair. "No special reason," he said. "He lived in Clayton City. It was difficult for him to be on hand for all our meetings. His law practice kept him engaged. He..." The Senator's voice faded off helplessly.

"That seems reasonable enough," said Kennedy quietly. "May I take these records of Merriam's work with me? They're Greek to me. I'd like to have someone look over them who could tell me what they're all about."

"I'm afraid I haven't the authority to let you remove them from the office," said the Senator quickly. "But if you'd like to bring someone here to look at them, by all means do so."

It was not a point Kennedy cared to force. He was certain there would be no papers of real interest in this group—if any existed. He felt that the information about Larsen was somehow of immense importance. He must get it to Patrick at once.

"Thank you for your assistance, Senator," he said. "Perhaps I shall send someone to look them over."

"By all means. By all means—any time." The Senator seemed suddenly in a great hurry to get rid of Kennedy.

The moment the detective had gone the Senator bustled out to his secretary. "Will you go down to the florist, Miss Withington, and pick out some flowers to be sent to Mrs. Graves for her dinner party tonight?"

He seemed in a fever of excitement as he waited for the girl to leave the office. The moment she was gone, he locked the door and crossed swiftly to the telephone.

"Operator... operator!" he was jiggling the receiver. "I want to make a long distance call to Clayton City. That's right. I want to speak personally to Mr. Jeff Stone. If they can't reach him at his own number, *they must locate him!* You understand? It is of vital importance!"

## CHAPTER XXIII

### A Woman Plans

JUDGE SCOTT stormed up to the front door of the house, unlocked it, went in with a mighty slam of the door behind him. His face was a dull brick-red with anger.

At the sound of the slamming door, his daughter came running into the hall. "Father! You're all right? We've been so worried."

"Of course I'm all right!" the judge shouted, in a voice that rattled the window panes.

"When they announced from the radio station that you hadn't turned up for some unaccountable reason..."

"Is Patrick out of bed yet?" the judge demanded.

"He's in the library with Miss Merriam. He was just on the point of starting out to locate you."

The judge strode into the library. Patrick, coat and hat on, was saying goodbye to Linda. He had, as Margo said, been on the point of leaving. He had slept twelve hours round the clock, shaved, bathed, and eaten. His strength had returned; his eyes were bright and clear once more.

"I'm mighty glad to see you, sir!" he said to the judge. "We had a bad

fright when you didn't make your radio speech."

Veins stood out on the judge's forehead. "The rats! The dirty rats!" he said. "Oh, it was all very clever, Patrick! Like everything else. I had a smashup. Car sideswiped my limousine—forced us into a lamp post. A cop turned up—a very conscientious cop. He kept me standing there, answering questions, until I missed the broadcast. Nothing I can complain about. The cop was within his rights! But by the Lord Harry, it was as clear as the nose on your face that they were simply trying to make me look bad by not going through with my speech." He paused for breath. "What did they say over the air?"

"They explained very politely that they hadn't the faintest idea why you hadn't appeared at the studio," said Patrick, "and they put on a rather bad piano player to fill in the time!"

The judge said several things in rapid succession that had the air sizzling.

Patrick smiled grimly. "I'm afraid you'll have to expect all kinds of petty annoyances of that type, Judge. They're going to make the going just as tough for you as they can."

"I've heard plenty more," said the judge, between his teeth. "Carstairs, one of our local bankers and a member of the Independent Voters League, tells me that mortgages are being paid up here in town right and left. Apparently these people are greasing the wheels plenty. Whether the mortgages are being transferred to another bank, or whether they're being paid outright, I can't say. But it is all going to mean support for Bradley. You can bank on that. Out-of-town delegates are beginning to show up and parties are being given for them and

newspaper men from other parts of the country. I understand certain hotels have made ridiculously low rates for these people. It's plain bribery."

"But hard to prove," said Patrick, "like everything else in this case."

Just then the front doorbell rang loudly.

"Now what?" fumed the judge.

A moment later, Anne Scott came into the room bringing with her Red Kennedy. Patrick sprang forward.

"You old son of a gun!" They shook hands warmly. "You know the Judge and Linda, Red. This is Mrs. Scott."

"We introduced ourselves in the hall," said Anne Scott. She smiled faintly. "If you think you are going to keep us women out of here while Mr. Kennedy reports to you, you're very much mistaken."

"Stay by all means," said Patrick. "But tell me, what have you got?"

"First," said Kennedy, taking a chair which Patrick indicated as the others grouped around him, "your hunch about the gun was right. It's the same one that was used to kill Merriam." He glanced a little unhappily at Linda, who was biting her lip.

"By Jove!" said Patrick.

"But," Kennedy warned him, "they can't trace the ownership of the gun. For all they know, it *might* have belonged to Henry Larsen—which would put him in a rather bad light."

PATRICK nodded. "I was afraid of that. We're going to have to prove very conclusively that Larsen wasn't in Washington on the day Clark—on that day."

"And your boy friends will have plenty of witnesses to prove he was, or I miss my guess," said Kennedy.

"Exactly. His wife would know, if we could find her."

"But I've got more to tell you," said Kennedy. And he proceeded to relate his experiences in connection with investigating Merriam's work. When he had finished with describing his discovery that Larsen had been a member of the Society for Petroleum Research, the judge growled in his throat.

"I could have told you that. Thought I had," he said.

"Well, sir," said Kennedy, "it wasn't so much the fact itself. It was the way Graves acted. He was scared stiff, for some reason. He certainly didn't want me to know about it."

Patrick stood up and began to pace the room restlessly. "It all brings us to the same dead end we've been up against from the start. What do we know?"

"First we know, aside from evidence, from Black Glasses' confession to me that Clark and Larsen were murdered—and that the murders were connected. So this business of discovering that they were connected through the Society doesn't help us much. We know that Clark *knew* something they intended he shouldn't divulge. I have been convinced it had to do with his work—something big. Something he didn't want to tell *anyone* till he was sure of himself. Remember, he told Linda that it was *knowledge* that was dangerous. Larsen knew that same thing, or guessed at it, and he died. Mrs. Larsen either knew or had some hint of it and *she* disappears! What is that knowledge?"

"I've been thinking," said Red Kennedy, "that it couldn't be knowledge of an invention. It would have to be some way that invention could be used."

"Fair enough," said Patrick. "But here's the thing that's been driving me nuts. What possible need can there be for them to elect Bradley president? If a president did something dishonest in office he would be impeached and his dishonest act revoked and this whole election business revealed. It doesn't make sense!"

"I have always heard that the way to break a chain is to attack its weakest link," said Anne Scott, in her quiet level voice. "I know Governor Bradley slightly. He has never impressed me as a man of much strength of character. I don't think he's an essentially evil man. He simply lets himself be guided by evil men. If you could reach him, talk to him, I believe you might get something out of him."

Patrick shook his head. "We probably couldn't get to him, Mrs. Scott. And besides that, I don't think he knows yet why he is being used. Doris Selby doesn't know—and she wants to know frightfully. If anyone could get it out of him it would be the woman."

The judge groaned. "It's the same old merry-go-round," he said. "We don't know what the scheme is, but we know Bradley's election is vital to its success. Yet the only way we are going to beat Bradley is to expose the scheme."

"I don't want to butt in," said Anne Scott, "but I have an idea—"

"Please," said Patrick.

"You haven't convinced yourselves that Mary Larsen is dead, have you? Then it seems to me your one chance is to find her and get her to talk. It so happens, Mr. Patrick, that I am on one of the hospital boards here in town. I've done a little checking today. Mary isn't in any of the hospitals or known private nursing homes."

"So that's that!" said the judge. "No trail at all."

"There's the woman," said Mrs. Scott. "The woman who's keeping the children."

"Mrs. Gotch," Patrick supplied the name.

"Maybe if you talked to her?" Anne Scott queried.

"My dear Anne," the judge boomed, "she is obviously in their pay."

"But, if she were not put on her guard. I thought that maybe if I questioned her . . . I was a friend of Mary Larsen's. She might let something slip. It would be quite natural for me to ask about Mary—to want to see the children. She might not suspect."

"I'm not going to let you place yourself in danger, Anne," the judge objected.

"I thought perhaps Mr. Patrick could come with me," she said calmly.

"He could wear one of Kauffman's uniforms—pass himself off as my chauffeur. Mrs. Gotch wouldn't know the difference."

"By Jove, it might work!" said Patrick. "Just one little slip to put us on the trail and we may crack this thing open yet."

"Then it's decided?" said Anne Scott.

"No!" boomed the judge.

Anne Scott smiled faintly. "We'll go directly after supper, Mr. Patrick."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### Cross-Examination

PATRICK, dressed in a chauffeur's uniform, glanced at Anne Scott, who sat beside him in the roadster. She was so thoroughly cool and unexcited. Not a wisp of her lovely gray hair was out of place. She shot him a level, friendly glance.

"You make a very handsome chauffeur, Mr. Patrick!"

Patrick touched his fingers to the visored cap. "Thank you, Madam."

A grand woman! No wonder the judge had done so well down through the years.

"You're not afraid?" he asked.

"Not in the least—if you mean am I afraid of physical danger. I hardly think it would be good politics for them to murder the opposition candidate's wife, Mr. Patrick. But I *am* afraid of failure. It would seem that finding Mary Larsen was our one chance of success. And Mrs. Gotch seems to be the only person through whom we have a chance to reach her."

"Don't be too disappointed if it doesn't come off," said Patrick. "I had one glimpse of her, the night Mary Larsen was taken away. She's a pretty hard-looking specimen."

There were lights in the house in which Mrs. Gotch lived. They drove boldly up to it and left their car standing in front. Patrick rang the front door bell. There was a considerable wait before the door was opened, and Mrs. Gotch confronted them. Slat-ternly, flat-chested, with sharp, hatchet-like features and very coarse iron-gray hair. She looked at them out of black, unfriendly eyes.

"Well, what do you want?" It was a hoarse, croaking voice.

"I am Anne Scott," said the judge's wife suavely. "I am a great friend of Mary Larsen's. I am terribly anxious to ask you about her—and to see the children."

"The children are in bed."

"Surely you wouldn't mind letting me talk to you for a moment?" Mrs. Scott said, very persuasively. "I've brought some things for the children. John, fetch them out of the car."

Patrick, looking a little disconcerted, went back to the car. He hadn't heard anything about this. But sure enough, in the back of the car were several packages. He smiled. Anne Scott was a woman after his own heart. She thought of details.

By the time he got back with the packages, Mrs. Scott had actually worked her way into the front hall. "Bring them in here, John," she said.

"Yes, ma'am." He went in and closed the door behind him.

Mrs. Gotch led the way sullenly into the kitchen. She stood facing them, almost defiantly. There was a saucer on the kitchen table with a smoldering cigar butt in it. Patrick wondered grimly where Mr. Gotch was. He managed to maneuver himself into a position so that his back was to the wall. He wanted no attacks from the rear.

"How are the children?" Anne Scott asked easily.

"Fine."

"What do you hear from Mary?"

"I don't hear from her," said Mrs. Gotch, "but she's all right. The children got a letter from her yesterday."

"Where is she?" Anne Scott asked. There wasn't a trace of suspicion or emphasis on the question.

Yet Mrs. Gotch's eyes narrowed. Patrick thought he had never seen such a repulsive face. There were no lines in it. The coarse gray hair was matted and unkempt.

"I guess you know," said Mrs. Gotch in a surly voice, "that Mrs. Larsen doesn't want anyone to know where she is. In fact, she didn't tell me herself. She had a nervous breakdown. She's got to have quiet."

"I understand," said Anne Scott smoothly. "I wouldn't think of going to see her, but I'd like to send her some

flowers—make sure she has everything she needs. You don't *know* where she is—or is it that you just prefer not to tell?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Gotch.

PATRICK, studying that ugly face, knew then that Mrs. Gotch was lying. He felt anger contracting the muscles of his throat. But he kept still. Anne Scott was doing a good job.

"You must have known Mary a long time for her to leave her children with you," she said.

"I have," said Mrs. Gotch.

"It's strange she never mentioned you to me."

"Why should she?" demanded Mrs. Gotch truculently. "Anyhow, I only just moved here. I knew her back home."

"Where was that?" It was the most casual of questions.

Mrs. Gotch cleared her throat. "Boston."

"Odd," said Anne Scott. "I always understood Mary came from Santa Barbara. She always told me she had never been east of Chicago."

"Say!" snarled Mrs. Gotch, "what are you trying to do—make a liar out of me?"

"My dear Mrs. Gotch, of course not. I simply thought it odd Mary had never mentioned having lived in Boston." Anne Scott was unruffled.

"Well, she did!" said Mrs. Gotch.

"Goodness!" said Anne smoothly. "It's just occurred to me. Did you notice whether there was an address on the letter Mary sent the children?"

"There wasn't."

"Have you got the letter?" Anne Scott asked. "I'd love to see it."

Mrs. Gotch hesitated. "Yes, I've got the letter," she said.

She opened the kitchen drawer and took out a small sheet of folded note-paper. She handed it to Anne Scott. Anne read it.

"This is Mary's handwriting, all right," she said quietly.

"Whose handwriting did you think it would be?" demanded Mrs. Gotch.

"Why, I thought possibly a nurse might have written it for her," said Anne Scott, with a pleasant smile.

Good girl, Patrick said to himself. She was doing a masterful job of cross-examination.

"There's no address on that note," said Anne Scott. "Have you the envelope? The postmark might help us."

"No, I haven't got the envelope," snapped Mrs. Gotch. "I threw it away."

"Isn't that rather odd? I mean—

to throw away the envelope and keep the letter?"

Dark anger flushed that ugly face. "I've had enough of this, Mrs. Scott. I know why you're here—trying to pry into things. And I know this guy you say is your chauffeur. He's John Patrick, the detective!"

"Detective?" Anne Scott's voice was maddeningly cool.

"Yes, detective! And if you know what's good for you, you'll both get out of here in a hurry. You've had your innings. Now beat it. I ain't telling you where that Larsen dame is, not with all your smooth tricks!"

There was a moment of dead silence.

Then Patrick heard the faint click of a door catch—the sound of running feet on the pavement outside. Someone had overheard their conversation and gone for help.

John Patrick has had a streak of luck. He has delivered some body-blows against Mr. Q's brutal syndicate. Or was it luck? Will he be able to avenge Linda's brother—Henry Larsen—Carmichel and his sweetheart? Or will the fiendish plot to destroy a proud nation and plunder world commerce succeed? Breath-taking developments are revealed in next week's thrilling, gripping installment.

## Cipher Solvers' Club for April

Continued from Page 41

Twenty-three—Arulas, Los Angeles, Calif.; \*Mrs. Anna M. Page, Shelburne Falls, Mass.; \*Mrs. W. C. Bird, San Francisco, Calif.; S. B. \*Plantagenet, Paterson, N. J.; Romeo, Waynesboro, Pa.; Ruth, Laramie, Wyo.; Kay Vee See, Seattle, Wash.; Box Six, Lapeer, Mich.; Stas, Brooklyn, N. Y.; \*F. E. Tinkham, Ripon, Wis.; Island, N. Y.; Helen, Boonton, N. J.; \*A. Meré, Albert B. Wooldridge, San Antonio, Tex.; Charles dith, Pittsburgh, Pa.; E. G. Ohazer, Anson, Tex.; E. Zirbes, Clinton, Iowa.

Continued on Page 74

We have met PABST  
and it is ours

PABST Export BEER  
TAP a Can  
BREWERY GOODNESS SEALED RIGHT IN

KEG LINED

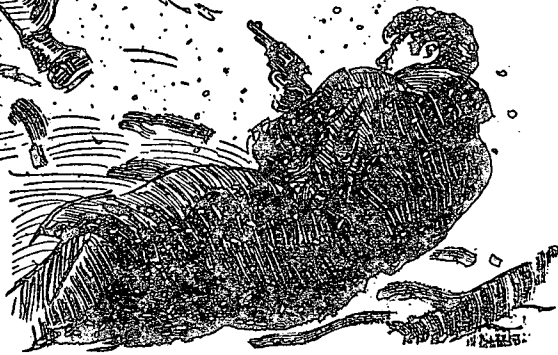
# Brothers of Hin

By

Arden X. Pangborn



The Chinese leaped with  
a snarl



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## *New York's Chinatown Was in Terror. Murders and Underground Activi- ties Went Unchallenged — Until Detective Gates Found Himself in the Midst of a Tong War*

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IT was not murder, but the thought of steaming tea and savory *lup chong fan*, already simmering on the broad, cast-iron stove of Wu Sing's Bamboo Inn, that hurried the steps of Detective Sergeant Gates along Mott Street.

Midnight was near and a cold gusty wind, laden with stinging flurries of snow, had driven the streets clear of their customary procession of tourists and curiosity seekers, so that the crooked little thoroughfare—with its

neon signs and its lighted windows glimmering bravely in competition with the elements—looked vaguely incomplete, like a Christmas tree decorated but devoid of gifts.

Gates pulled his gabardine more closely about his lank form and lowered his head into the wind. Wu Sing's café was but a block away, on the far side of Bayard Street. It would be but a moment now. But, as he neared the corner, a man reeled drunkenly from a darkened doorway. The detective started at the abrupt appearance, grunted as the man bumped into him. He put out a hand to steady the careening figure and a smile crossed the thin lips beneath his snap-brimmed felt.

Too much *mui kwe lu*, he thought,

but then a man has to keep warm, and perhaps rice wine is as good a way as any. He started to go on.

Suddenly the man let out an explosive breath, staggered a step away and collapsed like a broken concertina.

The smile vanished from the detective's face. He stooped over the fallen figure.

"Come on, old man," he said. "You can't sleep in the street, you know. Let me give you a lift."

Then his breath sucked in. He jerked abruptly erect. The man was not drunk; he was dying. The blade of a knife protruded from the front of his neck and his face was a horrible smear of red. Pain and hatred and fear had distorted that smear into a grimace so ghastly it chilled Gates as not even the bitter cold of the night had done.

He whirled toward the doorway from which the man had come. It was a mass of shadow. His pocket flash pierced the gloom. There was one step, a recess, a heavy wooden door. The door was bolted. He put his shoulder against it, but it did not budge. He shook his head, turned back. Pursuit was useless. The killer had had plenty of time to escape. Besides, a spark of life might still remain in the crumpled figure on the sidewalk.

Gates stooped once more. A new shock jolted him. The man was not Chinese, as he had first assumed, but white. He was short and stocky, well dressed, apparently prosperous. A diamond ring glittered on the little finger of one upflung hand. His hat, which had rolled from the semi-circle of gray on his half-bald head, was a Homburg. His topcoat, except for its sodden front, was immaculate.

"What happened? Who did it?" Gates roared against the whistling of-

the wind close to the dying man's ear.

It seemed to him that the bloody lips moved, that the puffy eyelids flickered. He bent lower, straining for the words, but the wind whipped them into a moaning sigh.

"Who did it?" he roared again.

And this time the whisper came clear. "Jade," the lips breathed. One word. Then a river of blood choked off the gasping breath. The man's body jerked. His eyelids opened. His pale eyes stared into the swirling snow and did not blink. Gates knew he was dead.

For a second, the detective rested on one knee on the frozen walk. His eyes scanned the street for possible assistance. Around the corner, near Pell and Doyer, Red Callahan of the uniformed squad would be stamping his chilled feet in a doorway, cursing and grumbling about the weather, but here there was only wind and snow.

HE bent again to his task, unbuttoning the man's topcoat, searching his pockets. He found a ring of keys, a handkerchief, a billfold. With the light of his torch, he examined the fold. Inside, stamped in gold letters across the pebbled leather, was a name.

"Wendell Harrison," he muttered half aloud. He shook his head. It meant nothing to him.

He started to drop the fold into his own pocket, halted abruptly as a small, flat object the shape of a silver dollar, only considerably larger, slipped from it into his gloved hand. He stared at the object curiously. It was stone, greenish-yellow in color, smooth and polished to a waxen luster.

Was this what the dying man had whispered of in his dying breath? This tiny piece of round, cross-veined jade,

with its perforated center and its inscription in Chinese? Or had the dying man been in delirium, not knowing what he had whispered? Gates wondered.

He slipped the stone back into the inner pocket from which it had come. As he did so, a rustle of sound came to his ears in a sudden lull of the wind. Gates had worked in Chinatown too long not to recognize instinctively the sound of slipped feet. He whirled, half rising. He saw the falling arm, the glint of metal in a scrawny fist as something crashed against his skull.

Only his movement and the thickness of his soft felt hat saved him from the full force of the blow. As it was, the gun butt caught him glancingly above the ear, sent him back to his knees. He tried to rise, but waves of blackness threatened to engulf him. Then he pitched forward on his face.

How long he was unconscious he did not know, but it must have been only for seconds, for when awareness came to him again he realized—as in a nightmare—that his assailant was still there. He tried to focus his eyes upon the wiry, jacketed figure, but the effort left him sick and dizzy. About him the world seemed to whirl in maddening fury. Vaguely he sensed the man was bending over him, was tugging at his arm. Suddenly he remembered. The billfold. The jade!

They were clutched in his hand beneath his body—and in a moment, this yellow villain who struck from behind and struck to kill would have them. Gates gritted his teeth, marshalled all his energy. He could not let that jade escape him now. For a second, his gaze cleared. He saw his assailant's face—hideous, thin, ash-gray. Its gleaming eyes were like those of a serpent, its

sunken cheeks like those of a corpse. Viciousness, cruelty and avarice were upon it.

The sight acted upon him like a whiff of ammonia, clearing his brain, loosening his muscles. His arm jerked convulsively. He managed to roll. His hand went for his shoulder holster.

Miraculously, it seemed to him, his .38 was in his fist. He realized the Chinese was striking at him again with that glinting object of steel, felt a wild surge of elation when the mad blow missed. He lifted his own weapon. It wavered, but he pressed the trigger. There was a hollow roar in the silent street.

The Chinese leaped back with a snarl. Gates knew he had not hit the man, had scarcely been able to lift the weapon off the sidewalk. But the shot had served its purpose. Like a frightened rat, the sunken-faced one wheeled and scurried for the safety of the doorway from which he had come, not even pausing to bolt it again.

Gates managed to get to his feet. He stumbled after the fleeing Chinese, fired another futile shot. Then the strength went out of his legs and he sank to the single step of the doorway, his revolver clanking to the sidewalk beneath his legs and his head lolling forward.

Indistinctly, he was aware of the banging of suddenly opened windows, of a hubbub of voices. Then his head began to clear again and he saw the husky form of Red Callahan rounding the corner at double quick and heard Callahan's number elevens pounding the sidewalk.

HE sucked in a lungful of cold air, felt the stabbing pains gradually vanish from behind his eyes, the nausea recede from his stomach.

Weakness remained in his knees, but he rose again. He explained to Red Callahan what had happened. Callahan raced through the hallway into which the killer had vanished, came back with a shake of his head.

"Stairway leads upstairs, another to the basement, and the hall goes right through to a courtyard in the rear. Hundred different ways to get away."

Gates nodded. His strength was beginning to come back.

"You take charge here," he said. "I'll call in."

He crossed Bayard Street, climbed the flight of narrow, linoleum-covered steps that led to the swinging doors of the Bamboo Inn. At this hour the restaurant was deserted except for the fat, aproned form of its genial proprietor, Wu Sing, who hustled smilingly among the warm odors of his tiny kitchen.

"The white detective is late," Wu chided.

"Business," Gates explained. "Murder." He went into a telephone booth, called headquarters. His report finished, he called his partner, Runt McDougall, who had remained behind to labor over the evidence in a case about to come to trial.

When he came from the booth, he found food in a half dozen steaming bowls on a corner table. The thought of eating no longer appealed to him, but he wanted to talk to Wu Sing, who was squatted upon a cane-bottomed stool awaiting him, his fat hands crossed atop his generous stomach.

"Ever see anything like that before?" Gates shoved the circle of jade across the inlaid table top. He watched Wu's almond eyes closely as they scanned the object. He could not be sure, but it seemed to him Wu's lids

narrowed almost imperceptibly, that some vague excitement seethed behind the placid exterior of his moonlike face.

"The white devils do not understand," Wu said abruptly. "You have been my friend many years. Do not keep this. Throw it away. Destroy it. Give it away. But do not keep it."

"And why not?"

Wu Sing's face was deadly sober when he spoke again. "Your life is in danger every moment you have it. The dead man—the man who was murdered—his name was Harrison."

Gates showed his surprise. "How'd you know that?"

"This jade—the miniature *pi* of Hin—has a history of great length. The white devils do not understand how jade is entwined in the traditions of the Middle Kingdom."

"But what has that to do with Harrison?"

"The Chinese newspapers have said within the last month that he purchased it in Canton." Wu Sing leaned forward, looking about him as though the emptiness of the room were just a mirage concealing a hundred pair of listening ears.

His voice lowered to a whisper. "You have heard perhaps of the Brothers of Hin?"

"Sounds like the title of a fairy story."

Wu fingered the jade. "If the inscription is correct, this is the miniature ceremonial jade known to collectors as the *pi* of Moy Lee Hin. It dates back to the reign of Hou Liang of the Five Small Dynasties. Moy Lee Hin was a courtier in the palace of the emperor. He organized a tong which preyed upon the rich and aided the poor."

"The Brothers of Hin?"

WU nodded. "According to the tradition of the Central Glory, this pi brought prosperity to Moy Lee Hin and his followers. When it was lost, the emperor jailed them and ordered them executed. Just before the execution, the stone was discovered and returned to Hin. At the same time, word came that the emperor had ordered Hin and his men freed. There is a saying in the Central Glory, 'May the fortune of the jade of Hin follow your footsteps.'"

"Then why is it such tough luck to have the thing now?"

"Because there is in Chinatown a man who will kill without hesitation to obtain it."

"And who is this man?"

"His name is Moy Lee Hin."

"Moy Lee Hin?"

"He has taken the name of the courier. He has organized a tong. It is a vicious, secret band of criminals. For months Chinatown has been in terror. There have been murders about which the white police have heard nothing, and a vast trade has sprung up in black poppy gum. No one knows who Moy Lee Hin is. It is said he has eyes with a mad gleam in them, and sunken cheeks showing the grayness of opium, but no one knows."

"So!" Gates recalled vividly the features of the wiry killer who had attacked him. A grin spread across his lean face. "He still wants it, huh?"

"It is a symbol of his power over those he uses. It was lost for many years, but now that it is found again, he must have it. Do not underestimate his strength, honorable friend."

The telephone in the booth shattered the stillness of the little restaurant.

Runt McDougall was on the line.

"Got the dope you wanted," he reported. "This guy Harrison was a jade

collector. Kind of a nut, I guess. He retired from the import business five years ago. Plenty of jack. Friends say he spent a lot of time in Chinatown, making deals and trades and one thing and another. They think maybe that's what he was doing there tonight."

"Okay. Anything else? How about his family?"

"Only one daughter. Wife's been dead three years."

"Daughter, huh? How old?"

"Twenty-two."

"Been notified yet?"

"Sure. Couple of the boys are up there now."

"Okay." Gates slipped the receiver back on its hook.

Halfway back across the restaurant floor, he halted abruptly. He wheeled, entered the booth again, jiggled the hook. When he had Runt on the line once more his voice had a new edge.

"Got a hunch," he explained. "Grab a cab and meet me on the corner behind Harrison's apartment in twenty minutes. Wait a second. Better call the boys up there now and tell them not to leave until we get there. Understand? Twenty minutes." He rang off.

RUNT McDOUGALL, smallest man on the force and one of the toughest, was already waiting impatiently on the designated corner when Gates arrived there nearly thirty minutes later.

"Had to stop for some stuff," Gates explained. "Come on." He led the way to the middle of the block, turned down the dark and ill-smelling alley that ran behind the Farrington Arms apartments. They entered a tradesman's door, found a freight elevator. A few moments later Conway of the homicide squad answered their rap at Harrison's door.

"The gal's in there," Conway said, jerking his head toward a bedroom at the rear of the large apartment. "Taking it pretty hard, I guess. A friend of hers from upstairs has got her in bed now with a sedative. She'll be all right pretty quick."

"Good." Gates dumped a package he had been carrying under his arm to the top of a rust-colored davenport, spread out its contents.

Runt McDougall, looking on, let out a snort. "What's the idea of that junk?"

"Never mind." Gates slipped off his coat, removed his soft-collared shirt. He replaced the latter with one of neckband style, donned a wing collar, a four-in-hand, a cutaway coat.

"You and Mullins can go now," he told Conway. "Runt and I will handle the situation."

"Then maybe you'll let me in on what's going on," McDougall suggested. "What's this trick get up all about?"

"Haven't you ever seen a doctor before?"

"Doctor?" Runt chortled. "You still look like a dick to me."

Gates shrugged. "Have it your own way." He slipped a pair of heavy-lensed glasses across the rim of his lean nose, picked up a black-leather physician's bag.

He nodded toward the room in which Harrison's daughter was resting. "Come on."

The luminous hands of the pink boudoir clock crawled toward 1:30. Gates, sitting in a straight back chair at the bedside, watched them through the thick lenses of his glasses with growing discouragement. He was uncomfortable. The lenses, although he had used them before, were a strain upon his eyes. His chair was hard. The

wing collar chafed his neck. It seemed to him he had been sitting there for hours.

Silence, heavy as fog, had settled upon the apartment long since. The interminable tiny ticking of the clock and the deep, regular breathing of the slender form beneath the coverlet of the bed seemed only to emphasize the monotonous stillness. Gates stirred. Perhaps his hunch had been wrong. He'd been wrong before—plenty of times. Perhaps nothing would happen. Another hour, and then . . .

A loose board squeaked in the adjoining room. Gates felt himself go tense. In the dim light, he thought he saw the connecting door move slightly. Was it real? Or was it merely some trickery of the heavy shadows?

Gates busied himself with a glass and some bottles on the bed stand. His fingers were steady, but his pulse beat fast. He picked up a clinical thermometer, placed it inside his black kit, and snapped it shut. He was just stalling, giving those moving shadows plenty of time.

Presently he turned, glanced toward the clock. His glance paused half way. His breath sucked in. He shoved back his chair, half rose to his feet.

If any flaw marred his portrayal of surprise, the two men who stood just inside the doorway showed no awareness of it.

"Who are you?" Gates demanded at last. "What do you want? What are you doing here?"

"Hold it!" rasped one of the men. His voice was cold, wooden, deadly. He stepped forward into the circle of light cast by the single, mauve-shaded bed lamp. The dim glow confirmed what his voice had already revealed. The man was Chinese.

His right fist clutched the shiny blue

steel of a .45. It was an ugly looking weapon.

"I say," Gates protested. "This is an outrage. What do you want?"

"Never mind," said the man. He motioned his companion. The latter moved over to the bedside. He, too, was Chinese. He, too, carried an automatic. He trained it on Gates' head.

"We didn't see you come in," said the leader in the same cold, emotionless voice. "Where'd you come from? What's your name?"

"I'm Dr. Morrison. I live here. Upstairs. I was called in to attend Miss Harrison."

"Upstairs," repeated the other, his little, black eyes unblinking.

His companion, at the bedside, stared down at the head of blond curls on the satin pillow. He muttered something in Cantonese. Again Gates tensed as the two exchanged rapid words.

Then the leader nodded, as if to himself.

"We came after her," he said. "But maybe you'd better come along, too."

Gates sputtered a protest, but the other looked on unperturbed.

"Search him," he ordered the man at the bedside.

The latter ran yellow hands over Gates' body.

"It's an outrage," the detective exclaimed. "I warn you I'll notify the police at the first opportunity."

"Nothing here," said the second Chinese.

"Wake her up," ordered the first. "We're ready to go."

"Wait a minute," Gates pleaded. "This girl's had a severe shock tonight. She's under a heavy sedative. You can't wake her up. She probably won't awaken until morning."

"You carry her then."

GATES sputtered some more, but ended up by wrapping the slender figure in the mauve satin coverlet and lifting it from the bed. "You can bring along my kit, at least," he snapped.

One of the Chinese picked it up.

"Any squawk out of you in the elevator," said the other one, "and you get a slug right where it hurts."

The black curtained sedan sped toward Chinatown. Half way there, it wheeled suddenly around a corner, dived through an alley, started to back-track. Another corner, another alley, and the car emerged into a side street.

Gates felt the pressure of the .45 in his side. The Chinese at his right, he saw, had a square of white silk in his free hand.

"Blindfold," he said noncommittally. He spoke in Cantonese to the driver. The latter pulled in to a curb, turned, held his automatic on Gates, while the man with the silken square adjusted it over the detective's eyes.

Gates felt the pressure in his side again. The car jolted on. He had an impression of other rapidly turned corners, of passage over rough, cobblestoned streets, of the rumble of an elevated train overhead.

Then they were in an alley again. Gates could tell by the utter darkness that beat against his thin, silk blind; by the dank, unpleasant odors of open garbage cans near by. There was a banging door, a halting journey down wooden steps, the musty smell of moist earth. More doors squeaked open and shut. Then there was warmth again, and other voices.

Someone fumbled at the knot behind the detective's head. The silken handkerchief came loose.

He was in a long, narrow room. Along one side of it were tiers of

bunks with burlap curtains. Beside them, on little stands, were peanut oil lamps, bamboo pipes. Opium outfits. The thin, pungent odor of poppy gum was in the air.

Into one of the bunks the driver of the car had dumped his blond-headed burden. Beside it he dropped the doctor's kit.

Half a dozen Chinese lounged about the room. At a table in one corner, a fan-tan game was in progress. The players looked up, chattering in Cantonese. Then a door at the far end of the room opened. The chatter stopped abruptly. A new figure entered the room.

Gates felt his heart leap. The newcomer was the wiry, jacketed Chinese with eyes like those of a serpent and cheeks like those of a corpse. Moy Lee Hin!

He advanced, listened as his henchmen explained Gates' presence. There was something compelling, almost awe-inspiring about Moy Lee Hin as he stood there at that moment; something that spoke of hidden power behind those gleaming eyes.

"It is to be regretted," he said softly when the others had finished, "that you should be inconvenienced. "Still, there is a certain piece of jade held by the white police. Since the untimely death of the young lady's father this evening, this jade belongs to her. I am sure she will be glad to have the police turn it over to us in return for her freedom—and for yours. In the meantime . . ."

He paused, stepped forward. The oily lids narrowed over his eyes, leaving mere slits. The tone of his voice changed.

"You are very clever," he said coldly, "but your glasses do not fool me. You are the white detective."

Gates grinned. "And you are Moy Lee Hin."

"I am afraid you shall not be able to leave here alive," the Chinese went on, the suavity coming back into his voice. He rattled something in his native tongue to the two gunmen.

"We have searched him already," the leader responded. "He is unarmed."

Moy Lee Hin considered. "The white detective showed wisdom in anticipating our move," he admitted, speaking softly. "You expected my men to take you as well as the girl. Unfortunately, you have depended upon others following you—upon Mr. McDougall, your partner, perhaps. You see, I know you well. But my men are skilled in shaking pursuit, even when they do not expect it. No one could have followed them here. It shall be my pleasure to watch you die, Detective Gates."

"Doctor Gates to you," came a masculine voice from one of the opium bunks.

Moy Lee Hin whirled. Gates shot a glance at the bunk, grinned. Runt McDougall sat there, his short legs swinging over the edge. Upon his head a curly blond wig did its best to belie his blue-whiskered jaw and his shaggy black eyebrows. His fingers held the butt of his .38 loosely, almost caressingly.

"All right," he went on. "Show's over. Put 'em up, boys."

FOR a moment no one moved. Gates felt the sudden chill, the menace of that moment. He saw Moy Lee Hin, half crouched, his lips drawn back, his sharp teeth showing. He saw Moy's gunmen, motionless, tense, ready for any command. He saw the fan-tan players, watching, waiting,

their almond eyes malevolent, their yellow faces cold with hatred.

Silence, sinister as death itself, settled over the grim tableau. Almost subconsciously, Gates recalled another moment like this one. In the trenches in the Argonne . . . just before the whistle blew to send his company over the top . . .

He took a rapid step forward, picked up his black leather kit from beside the bunk, snapped the catch.

Moy Lee Hin rapped out a monosyllable. A knife whistled through the air. Runt flung himself to one side. The glittering blade hurtled over his shoulder, quivered in the thin wooden partition behind him.

Gates jerked an automatic from the leather kit, whipped it up ready for action. But Runt had already fired. The knife thrower uttered a scream, stumbled forward, pitched on his face. His yellow fingers clawed at the rough floor.

Again Moy Lee Hin's voice rose. It was shrill, tremulous. This time there was no hesitation. The fan-tan players flung over their table. Flame and lead belched from behind its scanty protection as Moy leaped from the line of fire.

Gates wheeled and tugged at his trigger. He saw one of the players throw up his hands and sink from view, saw another drop his gun and tear madly at his stomach. For a second, it seemed the room was an inferno. Smoke seared his lungs, burned his eyes.

Bullets rained about him like hailstones. It was a miracle, he sensed, that none found their mark. The others were firing wildly, excitedly, their eyes closed. Or else he had been born under a lucky star.

Then sharp pain creased his leg. He

went down on one knee. He heard Runt cursing and cold fury boiled within him. His weapon swung in an arc.

He saw one of his captors crumple, his weapon still spurting futile lead. He saw the other dart for the protection of a wooden pillar and go down with a gaping hole above his right ear.

Abruptly he realized he had forgotten Moy Lee Hin. His slitted eyes pierced the haze of smoke. Moy had been hiding behind one of the pillars. Now, at the far end of the room, a portion of the wall was swinging back. Like a frightened cockroach, Moy was scurrying toward the opening, his gun dangling in his scrawny fist, forgotten in his eagerness for safety. Gates' voice pierced the din, commanding him to halt. But Moy had reached the opening.

There was no other course. Gates fired. Moy fell, a bullet in his thigh. He rolled, snarling like a wounded beast. He swung his weapon, took careful aim.

Across the smoke filled room, the two men faced each other. Everything else was forgotten in that moment—the noise, the carnage, the threat of sudden death.

Their automatics roared as one. Gates felt the thudding shock of lead, a streak of fire. It seemed as if his arm were slashed from shoulder to elbow. He shook his head, fighting the dizziness that assailed him. He waited, half-conscious, for the second shock—the final shock. Then his vision cleared. A weak grin crossed his lips. Moy Lee Hin would not fire again—ever.

Dimly Gates was aware the noise had ceased. He pulled himself to his feet. The room was empty except for the dead and the wounded. The others—there must have been only two or

three of them—had fled. On the opium smokers' bunk, Runt McDougall tried to sit up. He looked weak and groggy. A red streak parted his hair. The blond wig was gone.

"Be as good as new in a week," he muttered. Then he passed out cold.

Late the following afternoon Inspector Reeder of the homicide squad came into the white-walled room where Gates and McDougall lay on adjoining cots.

"Thought you'd like to know we rounded up the rest of the mob," he said. "Plenty of evidence, too—opium mostly, with a few murders thrown in, and a little white slavery on the side."

Gates twisted on his cot. "There's only one thing more. That piece of jade—the thing Wu Sing called the pi

of Moy Lee Hin. I've still got it. Somebody'd better see it gets back to Harrison's daughter. It belongs to her now."

The inspector shook his head. "She doesn't want it. She's giving Harrison's whole collection to the Metropolitan Museum. All except that one piece. She says it's for you."

"For me?" Gates grinned, turned to McDougall. "You want it?"

"Me? I wouldn't have it for a thousand bucks. It's bad luck."

"Not with Moy Lee Hin gone."

"Just the same, you can keep it."

Gates looked thoughtful. "I've got an idea," he said at last. "We'll give it to Wu. He'll get a greater kick out of that than if we gave him all the firecrackers in China."

## Cipher Solvers' Club for April

*Continued from Page 64*

*Twenty-two*—Mrs. Bertrum Craven, Rensselaer, N. Y.; H. H., Coventry, Ohio; Mrs. Altie Mather, West Allis, Wis.; F. J. M., Massillon, Ohio; Isaac Sachs, New York, N. Y.; N. Dak. Ump, Gilby, N. D.; I. Workum, Bismarck, N. D.

*Twenty-one*—Fae Malon, Englehart, Ontario, Canada; Sue de Nymme, Chicago, Ill.; Cecil T. Partner, Kokomo, Ind.; Quay, Springfield, Ill.

*Twenty*—Denarius, Detroit, Mich.; D. R. Eason, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Eatossin, Marietta, Ohio; Illy, Akron, Ohio; L. P. Janlin, Newburgh, N. Y.; T. E. McAlpine, London, Ontario, Canada; J. G. Meerdink, Jersey City, N. J.; Rena Patton, Los Angeles, Calif.; B. P., Miami, Fla.; \*Hugh B. Rossell, Washington, D. C.; George Shakeshaft,

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; Tricky, Los Angeles, Calif.

*Nineteen*—Mabs, Baltimore, Md.; Flo Rogoway, San Diego, Calif.

*Eighteen*—Avis Belew, Indio, Calif.; Mabel B. Canon, Philadelphia, Pa.; Eriela, Manorville, N. Y.; J. A. G., Philadelphia, Pa.; W. B. Nye, Flint, Mich.; Quluer, Port Washington, N. Y.; Rengaw, Chicago, Ill.; Harold Schlote, Philadelphia, Pa.; Speck, Little Rock, Ark.; Dr. Dirk E. Stegeman, Los Angeles, Calif.; Zizi, Shreveport, La.

*Seventeen*—J. C. K., Gary, Ind.; Lucille Little, Chicago, Ill.; John P. McMullen, Montreal, P. Q., Canada; My Pal, Brooklyn, N. Y.

*Continued on Page 86*



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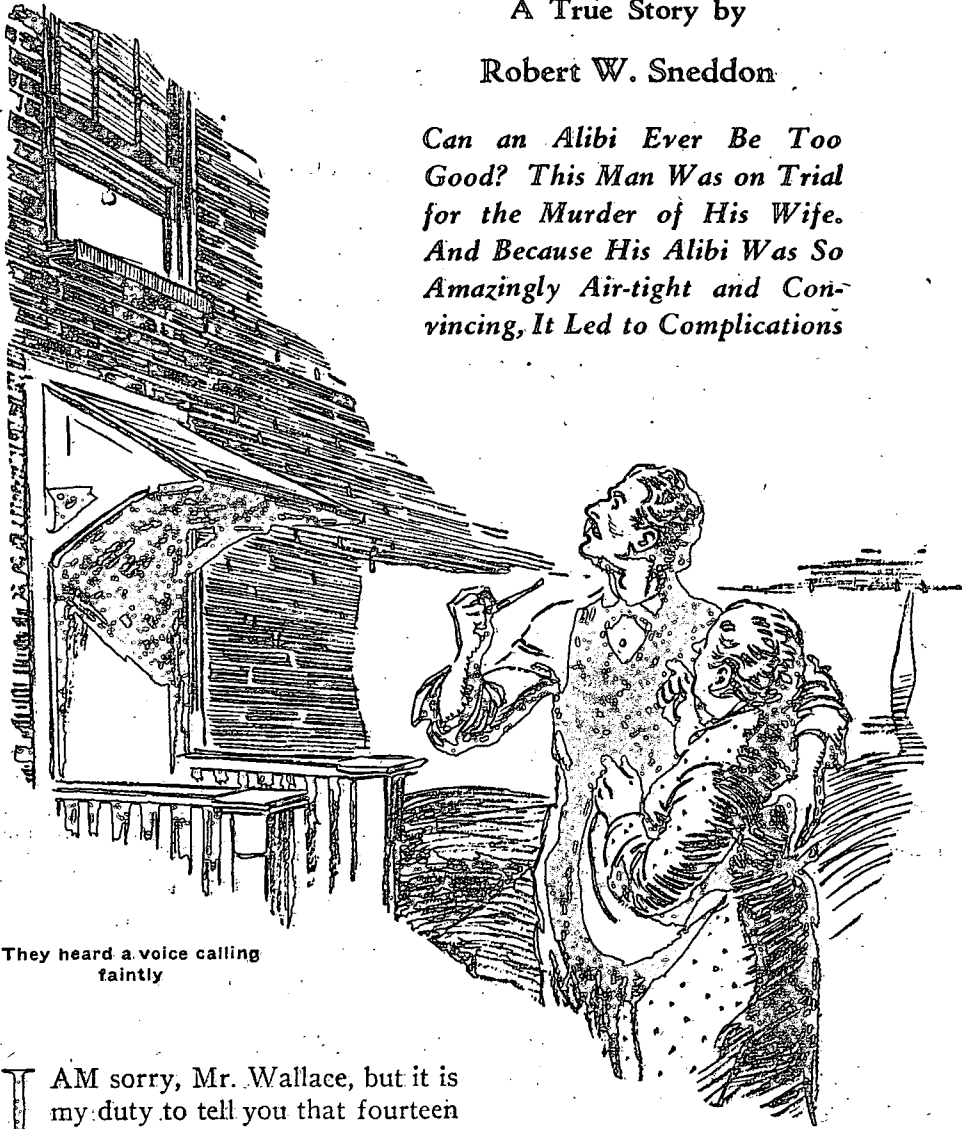
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# Who Was Qualtrough?

A True Story by

Robert W. Sneddon

*Can an Alibi Ever Be Too Good? This Man Was on Trial for the Murder of His Wife. And Because His Alibi Was So Amazingly Air-tight and Convincing, It Led to Complications*



They heard a voice calling faintly

"I AM sorry, Mr. Wallace, but it is my duty to tell you that fourteen days from today sentence of death will be carried out."

So said the Governor of Walton Prison, Liverpool, England, to William Herbert Wallace in the death cell where he lay convicted of the murder of his wife, Julia.

And all Wallace could find to say was—"Yes. I know."

What experience can any man have more terrible than to be arrested for the murder of his wife, to watch his accusers adding steadily to the web of surmisal and accusation, to listen to the law misinterpret actions which took place in the simplest of circum-

stances and read into them the most damning meaning and motive, and finally to hear sentence of death pronounced.

Terrible for a guilty man. But for an innocent man how infinitely more hideous, that moment when man's injustice appears to prevail, and God's justice to fail.

Wallace swore he was innocent.

Described as "the most baffling case of recent years," "the greatest human mystery of the century" and "a case which easily beats any work of fiction ever turned out by the most skilful writer of detective stories," the curtain had rung down on an amazing human drama.

No one then knew there was to be still another act.

The leading character was a tall thin man of fifty-two, with eyes deep set behind gold rimmed spectacles, the brow of an intellectual, ears lying close to the head, straight nose, prominent high cheek bones, a small mustache.

A collector for the English Prudential Insurance Company, he had lived with his wife, Julia, for sixteen years at 29, Wolverton Street, in the Anfield section of the city of Liverpool. The house was one of a row of brick houses all alike. Behind ran a long narrow alley on which the back doors of the houses opened.

Julia Wallace was about the same age as her husband. They said she was untidy, careless, inclined to be old-fashioned, while Wallace was methodical, keeping up with the times, interested in science and inventions. These differences appeared to make no trouble. Everyone said they were an ideally happy and devoted couple. Both were ardent musicians. Julia played the piano, and Wallace the violin.

They were inseparable companions except when Wallace was out on his collecting rounds, giving occasional talks on science at the Technology Institute, or making his fortnightly visit to his chess club.

And in the chess club we draw up the curtain on the evening of January 19, 1931. The club met in a room of the City Café open to the general public. Only the captain of the club, Samuel Beattie, was there, shortly after seven when one of the waitresses called him to the phone.

"Somebody asking for Mr. Wallace, sir. Will you speak?"

Beattie went to the phone. "Mr. Wallace isn't here. Anything important?"

The strong, rather gruff voice at the other end of the line asked if a message could be left.

"Half a mo'," said Beattie, "I'll jot it down. I have an old envelope here."

He wrote down the message. Half an hour later, about a quarter to eight, he saw Wallace commencing a game with a member and he went over to him.

"Oh, hello, Wallace. Just a moment. I have a message for you."

"Who from?" asked Wallace.

"From a man, Qualtrough."

"Qualtrough? Qualtrough? Who is Qualtrough?"

"Well, if you don't know, no more do I. Here's the message. The name is R. M. Qualtrough. He said he wanted to see you tomorrow evening at seven-thirty. Something in your way of business—his daughter coming of age. The address was 25 Menlove Gardens East."

"Never heard of the chap," said Wallace thoughtfully. "Where is Menlove Gardens East? It wasn't Menlove Avenue, he said?"

"No, Menlove Gardens East. I have it written down here."

"All right, I'll jot it down in my notebook. Did the chap spell his name?"

"Yes."

Wallace settled down to his game, and when he rose from the table a few minutes after ten, he was the winner. For two hours he had concentrated all his mental efforts on the chess battle. He spoke to several members. One of them thought he had heard the name Qualtrough but could not place it, and none of them could give specific directions as to how to reach Menlove Gardens East.

Next day, January 20, Wallace spent the day on his rounds and got home a few minutes after six. His tea was ready for him so he had it with his wife, arranged some forms and papers he wanted to take with him, changed his collar after washing face and hands and at 6:45 set out to find the mysterious Mr. Qualtrough.

Let us now follow the clock hand as Wallace takes a street car twenty minutes walk from the house. The time is now 7:06 to 7:09.

THREE times he asks the conductor about how to get to Menlove Gardens and tells him he is a stranger in the district and has an important business call. The conductor could not fail to recall him.

The conductor directs him to change at Penny Lane and there Wallace boards another car, the time 7:15.

"Put me off at Menlove Gardens East, please."

At the next stop the conductor touched him on the arm:

"Menlove Gardens West, sir. You'll probably find Menlove Gardens East is in that direction."

"Thank you," said Wallace, "I am a complete stranger here."

He got off and walked away. At 25 Menlove Gardens West he rang the door bell and a woman answered.

"Is there a Mr. Qualtrough lives here? Is this Menlove Gardens East?"

"No," said the woman, "the name is Mather, this is West. I never heard of East."

Wallace made no mention of the fact that he had already stopped a man and been told there was no such place as Menlove Gardens East—this at 7:20.

A little later he accosted a policeman who told him there were Menlove Gardens North, South, and West, but no East.

"Funny," said Wallace, "I am an insurance agent looking for a Mr. Qualtrough who rang up my club and left a message for me with my colleague to call on Mr. Qualtrough at 25 Menlove Gardens East."

"Why don't you try 25 Menlove Avenue—third house in the second block."

"Thank you. Oh, do you know where I can see a directory?"

"Down Allerton Road, or if not, at the police station—or at the post office."

"Much obliged," said Wallace. "It's not eight o'clock yet," and pulled out his watch. "It's just a quarter to eight."

The police man looked at his watch. "Correct, sir. Just 7:45."

It was after eight o'clock when Wallace came into a newspaper store in Allerton Road and asked to use the directory. He looked through it, then turned to the manageress—"Do you know what I'm looking for?"

"No."

"25 Menlove Gardens East."

"I never heard of any East, sir. North, South and West there are, but no—"

"Yes, I've been to 25 West. Well, goodnight."

And giving up his quest as a bad job Wallace turned his steps towards home and what waited there for him. His trip back by street car and walking took him half an hour.

At 8:45, his neighbors in the house next door, 31, Mr. and Mrs. Johnston, coming out into the alley by their back door saw Wallace walking to his own back door.

"Good evening, Mr. Wallace," said Mrs. Johnston.

Wallace stopped and peered at them. "Have you heard anything unusual tonight?" he asked.

"No, why? What has happened?"

"I can't understand. I've been round to the front door and I've tried the back and I can't get in. Both doors are fastened."

"Your wife?"

"She will not be out. She has a bad cold."

"Well, try the door again and see."

They saw Wallace go to the back door and try it. He did not use his key, just turned the knob, and the door opened.

"All right. It opens now," said Wallace and went inside.

The two outside in the alley could see that there was a faint light upstairs in the middle room. A moment later they heard Wallace faintly call two words—they thought he called—"Julia! Julia!" and with that the light went up. Then there was a faint light in the upstairs back room which went out suddenly, as though a match had been struck.

The Johnstons stood looking up at the house. Not more than a couple of

minutes passed, then from the back door came Wallace and to them. He was distressed and agitated.

"Come and see," he said hurriedly, "She has been killed!"

"Killed—no—not your wife?"

"Yes."

"Good God!"

THEY followed Wallace through the back kitchen, into the kitchen dining room, and from there into the front parlor. The gas was lit and he told them he had lit it and so made his discovery.

Mrs. Wallace was lying on the floor, her feet towards the fire place, her head towards the door. The body was fully clothed. The head was not a pretty sight, badly battered back and front, with bone and brain protruding. The murderer had struck again and again in a mad savage fury of assault.

Mrs. Johnston uttered an exclamation of horror, then stooped and held the dead woman's hand.

"Cold!" she said.

Wallace also bent over and touched the hand. He nodded his head.

"They have finished her. Look at her head," he said quietly.

"Whatever have they used?" asked Mrs. Johnston looking about her.

Wallace did not answer. All three went out to the kitchen and there Wallace pointed to the door of a cabinet which had been wrenched off. He reached up on a shelf and took down a cash box and looked into it.

"Anything missing?" asked Johnston.

"Looks about four pounds, but I can't say till I look at my books."

"Will you go upstairs and see if everything is all right before I go for the police and the doctor," said Johnston.

Wallace went upstairs. He was only gone a moment. When he came down he said:

"There's five pounds in a jar they have not taken."

"All right, I'll go now," said Johnston and left.

"We'd better go out to the kitchen," Mrs. Johnston suggested. Wallace went with her and helped her get the fire going again. For a moment he was overcome.

There was a knock at the front door and Mrs. Johnston went to answer it. She found she could not get it open and called to Wallace who came to her assistance.

Constable Williams stepped inside.

"Something terrible has happened, officer," said Wallace to him.

Williams went into the parlor and felt the dead woman's right wrist. There was no pulse, but the flesh felt slightly warm.

"How did this happen?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Wallace. "I left the house at 6:45 to go to Menlove Gardens and my wife accompanied me to the backyard door. She bolted it. She would then be alone in the house. I went to Menlove Gardens to find the address given me was wrong. Becoming suspicious I returned home and went to the front door. I inserted my key but found I could not open the door.

"I went to the back door but could not open that, so I again went to the front door and this time found it was bolted. I hurried round to the back door to try again but this time it opened. I entered the house and this is what I found."

Williams and Wallace went over the house. In the middle bedroom on the mantelpiece was an ornament from which protruded five one-pound notes.

Mrs. Wallace's clothes in a recess had not been disturbed. In the back room, used by Wallace as a laboratory, everything appeared to be in order. In the front bedroom there was disorder. The clothes were half off the bed, the pillows on the floor, but no bureau drawers opened. In the kitchen downstairs the door had been wrenched from a small cabinet.

## II

BACK again in the room of death, the policeman could not help noticing, as he said—"how extraordinary cool and calm" Wallace was. He lit another gas jet after stepping round the body. Just then Police-Sergeant Breslin arrived. He pointed to a bundle under the shoulder of the body.

"That looks like a mackintosh."

Wallace looked down at the raincoat and then out into the hall.

"Yes," he answered. "It's an old one of mine. It usually hangs in the hall."

In quick succession now arrived other detectives, including Superintendent Moore and Dr. MacFall, professor of Forensic Medicine at Liverpool University.

This expert examined the body carefully, noting the head injuries, examining the nails and hands for possible clues left by the killer, hairs, skin, etc. The hands and lower arms were cold as ice, but the upper arms and body still were warm. *Rigor mortis* the stiffening which follows death was present only so far in the upper part of the left arm and the neck. The time was now 10:05. It was the expert's opinion that death had taken place four hours earlier—six o'clock.

From the nature of the wounds he deduced the murderer had struck

eleven blows, the first of which was sufficient to cause death. They could all have been inflicted in half a minute.

The mackintosh had been taken from under the body.

"Is this your mackintosh?" Superintendent Moore asked Wallace.

Though Wallace had already recognized the raincoat as his, this time he made no answer. He put his hand up to his chin.

"Had Mrs. Wallace a mackintosh like this?" asked Moore.

Still Wallace did not answer.

"It's a gent's mackintosh," said a detective. "Blood on it and part of it burned off at the bottom." And he held it out to Wallace to examine.

"Yes, it is mine," said Wallace. "I wore it this morning, but I changed it for the afternoon. I left it hanging in the hall at half past one. Of course it was not burned like that when I wore it."

The raincoat was carefully examined. It was splashed with blood on the front, and the sleeves. Ashes in front of the gas-fire showed where it had been burned.

Dr. McFall believed the blood stains came from Mrs. Wallace's spurting wounds. The first thought that came into Moore's mind was that the raincoat had been worn by the killer, to protect him from getting his clothes stained. If he had put on the coat, then he had gone about the crime in the most deliberate way. Why, however, had he tried to burn it, as he evidently had? There seemed to be no sense in that? And no sense in him making a bundle of it and putting it under the body. The natural action would have been to have dropped it on the floor, and left it there.

Detective and medical expert stared at the coat in perplexity, but the pres-

ent behavior of its owner was equally disturbing to them. He stood in the room with them, the dead body of his wife still on the floor, watching them. He was smoking a cigarette, flicking the ashes into a bowl on the sideboard, leaning forward so as not to step into a splash of blood.

Then Moore had another inspiration. Was it possible that when Mrs. Wallace heard someone at the door, as she had a cold, she slipped the raincoat over her shoulders and went to the door. She admitted the fatal caller and took him into the parlor. And there while she still had the raincoat on her person she was suddenly attacked.

Dr. MacFall pointed out that the stains would then be on the shoulders and not, as they were, on the lower front hems and the sleeves. Certainly not in the inside of the cuffs as they were.

And Moore had to admit this about killed his theory. All at once, however, he found that the hem of the victim's skirt bore marks of burning. By measurements Moore found these burns might have come from the skirt touching the flame of the gas-fire. And the burning of the raincoat appeared to coincide. Once more it was possible that Mrs. Wallace might have been wearing the raincoat.

Had she accidentally grazed the flame as she struggled with her assailant? But then there was not the slightest sign of struggle, the rug was unrumpled, no chairs upset, not even the slight music stand on which Wallace's sheets of violin music still rested.

It looked as though Mrs. Wallace had been seated when she was suddenly struck down. Surely, sitting in a room heated by a gas-fire, she would

not still be having a raincoat about her.

Moore came back to his first idea. The killer had worn the coat. There must have been some purpose behind his trying to destroy it and hide it, but what that purpose was, he could not decide.

He stood looking down at the floor. Funny there wasn't a footprint of any kind. Now here was Wallace who had told him when he came into the room it was dark and he had to light the gas. Surely he must have stepped into the blood puddle.

"You must have been walking in the blood, Mr. Wallace," said Moore thoughtfully, "D'ye mind if I take a look at your shoe soles?"

Wallace made not the slightest objection. Moore could not find a speck of blood on his shoes, his socks, clothes, hands, nails.

Moore went in search of blood. It stood to reason there must be blood elsewhere in the house. But he could not find a speck of it outside the death room.

The killer had left no trail or trace of the blood which from medical evidence must have spurted on him as high as the knees. He had not carried it on his shoes as he left the front parlor and made his exit. There was no sign that he had washed himself free of the stains that must have been on his hands, no stained water, or even wet towels.

There was no discarded garment of any kind that bore stains. There was no indication that the killer had tried to cleanse his clothes, his shoes, for even though he had worn the raincoat it would not have protected the bottom of his trousers or his shoes.

Whatever weapon had been used must have been blood and brain smeared. Search in the room, and all

over the house failed to find any weapon whatever, or anything that could have been used as one. The killer had carefully taken it away with him.

No wonder Moore felt up against a blank wall.

WALLACE had made a statement to him, telling him all about his wanderings that night, his leaving the house at 6:45 and his return, accounting for all his actions and doings.

He was now sitting out in the kitchen with the cat on his knee stroking it.

Moore dismissed as utter nonsense, a strange idea which flashed into his head. No man who had just battered his wife to death could sit nursing a cat and act the way he was doing, though certainly he never had seen a sudden bereft husband take the death of a beloved wife so calmly.

He sent Wallace off to spend the rest of the night with a relative and himself continued to prowls about and confer with other medical men who had arrived. One of them, who with Dr. MacFall watched the progress of the stiffening of the body, estimated the time of death as about six o'clock, but gave a wide margin of any time between four and eight, absolutely not later than eight.

All next day search was made for the mysterious Mr. Qualtrough. From all appearances he was the man responsible for the tragedy. It certainly looked as though he had contrived to lure Wallace away from home and to keep him on a wild goose chase for a non-existent address that would give the killer ample time to commit his crime. But investigators having nothing more than a name which might very well be an assumed one, got nowhere at all.

It was plain though that Qualtrough, whoever he really was, must be someone who knew a good deal about Wallace's routine of life. In the first place he must have known that Wallace frequented the chess club, which held meetings on Mondays and Thursdays of each week. His information must have been even more definite, that actually Wallace was there every other Monday to take part in the Second Class Championship, which had started on November 10 and was still in progress.

Actually there was a card on the wall of the café with the names of the seven players in this competition and the dates of the various games, and on it Wallace was set down to play on January 19, the evening of the telephone call.

Anyone in the café could then have known Wallace was likely to be there for the January 19th match.

If Qualtrough was the murderer why had he postponed his crime to the night of the 20th? What better occasion could he have had than Wallace's absence for three hours at the club?

In that space of time he could have done his killing in perfect safety.

It was possible that he chose the second night in the hope that he might find more money in the house. Wallace collected from thirty to forty pounds a week, Thursday being the day he settled with the office. The murderer might have thought to find more money on Tuesday than Monday. As a matter of fact Wallace had paid out in claims most of his collections and had little over forty pounds of the Company money in the house.

The police noted that if the motive of the crime was theft, the criminal had been singularly bad in his work. He had left the five one-pound notes

upstairs, on one of which the police found a blood smear, and he had not bothered to take Mrs. Wallace's handbag in which was thirty shillings.

If the motive was not theft as was evident, then what had inspired the killer to the brutality of his attack? Mrs. Wallace was a frail woman who could make no resistance. No one in the street had heard her cry out. There was no sign of forced entry into the house. Had she opened the door to her caller and so signed her death warrant? What had happened to rouse him to such savage blind fury?

There seemed no end to the questions which arose? One was answered next day. A woman who went to the Wallace home once a week to do the cleaning accompanied a detective there and at once declared that the kitchen poker was missing, as was also a short iron bar kept by the grate of the gas-fire. She used it to clean out under the grate. That these were the weapons used by the killer, was the natural assumption. What had he done with them?

An intensive search was at once made in nearby dustbins, in gardens and a park. Earth was dug and bushes uprooted, but the missing ironware remained unfound.

### III

AN unrelenting hunt was kept up for the one man in the case who might shed some light on the darkness, but Mr. Qualtrough did not come forward to volunteer information, nor could he be found.

The first clue came from the telephone company. The call to the chess club had come from a street booth. There was no doubt about it, the caller had complained to the operator about difficulty in getting the number.

The police were glad to get the news, but the information carried more trouble with it. Mr. Qualtrough had used a telephone booth only four hundred yards away from Wallace's house. If his business was genuine why had he not walked the short distance to 29 Wolverton Street; and seen Wallace there.

It took the police a little over a week to answer that last question. Qualtrough had not walked to 29 Wolverton Street, simply because he had just left that house, coming out of the front door and walking calmly to the booth to ring up the chess club and ask for himself.

Everything was clear now. There was no Mr. Qualtrough at all. Just a very cunning, wife-murderer, named Wallace.

Once this conclusion was arrived at, action was prompt. The police descended on Wallace at his relative's house and arrested him.

"You are charged with the wilful murder of your wife."

"What can I say in answer—I am absolutely innocent," said Wallace earnestly.

Suddenly everything he had done or said on the night of the crime became the deeds, the speech of a guilty man, a cunning deliberate killer plotting the perfect crime. Every material circumstance was regarded as indicating his guilt.

There was no blood on hallway or stairs. Wallace had seen to that.

There was no weapon. Wallace had removed and hidden the poker and the bar. It did not help him any to deny he had ever seen any bar in the parlor near the grate. There had been a bar. He must have seen it, said the police who did not take into account the fact that we can be in the same room with

some object, or pass it daily, and never notice it until our attention is called to it.

The fact that there was not a spot of blood on his clothes as must have been there, had he been the murderer, was held against him. The allegation of the authorities was that Wallace had stripped to the skin, put on the rain-coat and committed his butchery. In some way not explicable, he washed his blood-splashed feet and legs, his hands, without water, without towels, or drying rags. It was all part of his cunning preparation.

That preparation had started twenty-four hours earlier when he had begun to plant his alibi. At the chess club his friends learned all about his going to be away from home next evening. They could testify as to the message from Qualtrough.

It did not help Wallace any to have his friend, Beattie, testify that the voice he heard over the phone was not Wallace's. The police and court assumption was that Wallace disguised his voice.

And the night of the crime, what an elaborate piece of work to deceive. Every move a calculated one. Wallace impressing his personality on street car conductors, punching their mental time clocks so that his alibi would be timed and charted. Even enlisting a policeman as witness of his position at 7:45. Making an eccentric remark in the paper store so that he would be remembered. A callous criminal if ever there was one.

Then this business of not being able to get into his own house. He was waiting till someone came out so that he could get them as witnesses to the hour of his arrival home.

What if a locksmith did say that the locks of both back and front doors

were defective, and that Wallace might have found difficulty in getting in? Detectives said that anyone who used these locks every day could open them with just the least humoring.

The authorities even found it strange that Wallace when he went into the house went upstairs first instead of into the parlor. A very suspicious circumstance. They did not admit that it was possible Wallace seeing no light in the parlor might naturally think his wife had gone to bed.

They found it strange that when he went into the parlor to light the gas he did not step into the blood puddle. He knew what was there and dodged it, was their idea.

Proof that they were dealing with a hardened monster lay in his curiously detached behavior during the detective's investigation in the house. He showed no grief over his loss, no deep emotion. It was inhuman and revolting. Here was his wife murdered and he was smoking cigarettes, fondling a cat.

They did not take into account that the favorite author of the man was Marcus Aurelius whose "*Meditations*" counsel stoicism—to be patient, suffer, endure, and that he tried to follow this advice in his everyday life.

IT was freely admitted there was no motive for the crime. Here was a woman of fifty-two living in a small house in comparatively humble circumstances. What enemies would she have who would trick her husband out of the way so that they could enter and beat her to death with an iron-bar? Money did not enter the case, it was not murder for gain. Then who killed her? Someone wearing a raincoat. And what casual intruder would have any interest in trying to destroy that

raincoat, and once more the pointing finger came round to Wallace.

Little assistance was given him by the testimony of friends who testified that husband and wife had always been devoted to each other, and that it was incredible Wallace could murder his Julia. Wallace had kept a diary for years. Every page in it bore witness to his love and admiration for his wife and her attainments.

The authorities held obstinately that this testimony proved nothing but that Wallace was clever in masking his real feelings. He had planned to murder his wife and he did. His behavior before and after the murder showed how cold-blooded he was, how carefully planned the crime had been, what a strange control he had over his emotions. He was a sane man who knew exactly what he was doing.

Yet in court Dr. MacFall testified the murder was not an ordinary case of assault or serious injury, it was a case of frenzy. Yet in less than half an hour after the killing Wallace was talking calmly to a street car conductor and others.

Time tests established positively that Wallace must have spoken the truth in saying he left the house at 6:45.

When had Mrs. Wallace been last seen alive? Between 6:30 and 6:35.

A milkboy swore that he had left a milk can and knocked on the door at 6:30, he then delivered a can at the Johnstons', and came right back to the Wallaces'. Mrs. Wallace had, in the meantime, taken in the can and emptied it. She gave him the empty can and told the boy to hurry home because he had a cough. He knew what the time was because when he passed the church it was 6.25, and it always took him five minutes to get to the Wallace house.

A newsboy delivering a paper at the

Johnstons' swore he saw this boy standing on the steps of the Wallace home at 6:37. He also had looked at the clock in passing.

It was maintained in Wallace's defence that the day after the murder, the milk boy said in the hearing of several witnesses the time he saw Mrs. Wallace last was 6:45. The defense also produced a newspaper dealer who left a copy of the Liverpool *Echo* at the Wallace door, 6:35, at which time he did not see the milk boy. This paper was found by the police lying open on the kitchen table. It had been taken in by someone in the house.

If it had been taken in by Mrs. Wallace, then she was alive after 6:35. She must have looked at the paper. If by Wallace, then he certainly had no time to waste looking at a paper.

The time, at narrowest, between Mrs. Wallace being seen alive and Wallace leaving the house, was ten minutes.

IN that scant space of time it was alleged that Wallace undressed to the skin, put on the waterproof, killed his wife, dressed once more and left the house to face an observant world.

For four days learned counsel battled, both prosecution and defense making out a plausible story. There was no motive discoverable, no monetary gain from the death.

The judge, Mr. Justice Wright, summed up very clearly and indicated on many points the prosecution had failed to prove its case—that the whole crime was so skillfully devised and executed that it might be difficult to say that it could be brought home to anyone in particular. He added—"Indeed the evidence is quite consistent with some unknown criminal for some un-

known motive having got into the house, executed the murder and got away."

The jury, two of whom were women, had no hesitation in making up their minds. The jury was out only an hour and came back with a verdict of guilty. Wallace was sentenced to death by hanging.

On May 18 he came out momentarily from the shadow of the gallows. His counsel presented his case to the Court of Criminal Appeal and it was heard by the Lord Chief Justice and two others.

Haggard with anxiety Wallace awaited their verdict. It came at last.

"We have discussed this case with care and anxiety, and we have come to the conclusion that the case against the appellant was not proved with that certainty which is necessary to justify the conviction. The appeal will be allowed."

A warder touched Wallace's shoulder and with a quick step he walked toward those cells which now had no terror for him.

For the first time in British legal history, a conviction for murder had been quashed on the grounds that the verdict of guilty was unreasonable and not supported by the evidence.

Wallace went free, but with him went the dark shadow of the crime. No compensation was offered him by the government which claimed, and fairly enough, that justice had not miscarried. He found himself in a new world. Old friends turned away from him, for though his case had been dismissed and no proof of his guilt established, on the other hand a jury of his peers had not pronounced him innocent. He was deluged with anonymous letters. He could not carry on his old job. His company, however, which

had contributed to his defense, gave him a desk job.

He went to live in a bungalow with a housekeeper in a pretty village and tried to interest himself in his garden, his chess, his books, his music, in setting down his recollections of his dead wife and their mutual love. He continued his diary.

"I suppose in the past twelve months, apart from men I have met in my business, I have not spoken a friendly word to more than four people or had a friendly word spoken to me. This is what it means to be wrongfully sentenced to death and then acquitted."

He found he could not play chess. They had said his alleged crime had been the moves of an expert chess player.

He put his violin away. It recalled his evenings with Julia.

He found some relaxation in detective novels but he came to this conclusion:

"I am still searching for a murder

mystery more extraordinary than the one that has broken my life to pieces.

"Now let me say this: I KNOW THE MURDERER. In the porch of this lonely house of mine I have an electric switch and lamp. I have placed them there to safeguard my life. Every night when I return home from business in Liverpool I am on the alert for attack. The figure I expect to see crouching and ready to strike will be that of the man who murdered my wife. He will attempt to remove me so that I cannot complete the only mission I have in life, to place him in the condemned cell I occupied. At the time of the crime I now know he was in desperate circumstances."

But though a murderer came to Wallace's cottage, it was another and grimmer one, the fell disease cancer. He died in hospital in February, 1935. Though delirious at the end no word escaped from his lips to clear up the crime.

The question Who Was Qualtrough? is still to be answered.

## Cipher Solvers' Club for April

*Continued from Page 74*

Sixteen—\*H. Le. Care, Norfolk, Va.; Robert De Mougeot, New York, N. Y.; Farmer Dot, Perry, N. Y.; The Red Duke, Bronx, N. Y.; L. S. H., Washington, D. C.; Pearl Knowler, Wendling,

Oreg.; Ralph B. McEwen, New Bedford, Mass.; Ex-Sgt., Ossining, N. Y.; \*Nick Spar, Lynchburg, Va.

*Continued on Page 131*

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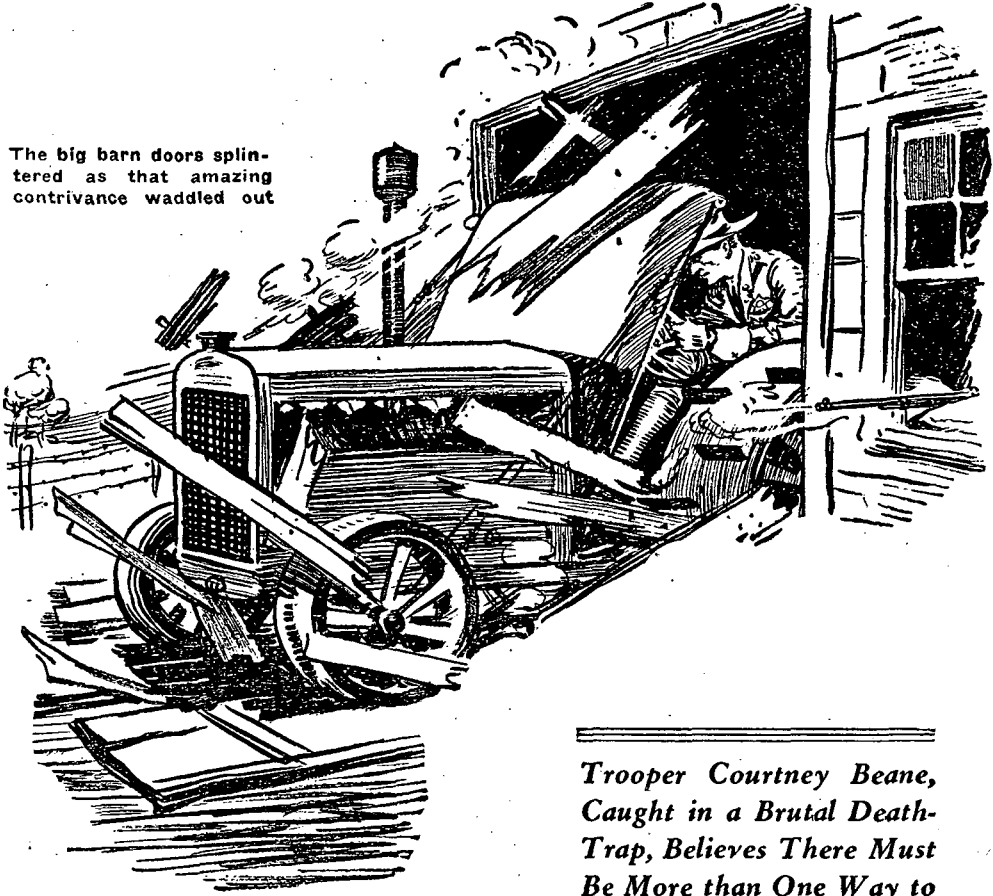
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The big barn doors splintered as that amazing contrivance waddled out



# Way for a Tank

By

Charles Molyneux Brown

**T**ROOPER COURTNEY BEANE, Hardin County's contribution to the personnel of the State Police, thundered along a stretch

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*Trooper Courtney Beane,  
Caught in a Brutal Death-  
Trap, Believes There Must  
Be More than One Way to  
Skin a Cat — or to Fight  
Criminals to a Finish!*

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---

of paved highway, the loosely knitted hundred and seventy pounds of him loafing in the saddle of his motorbike.

Beane was thinking pleasantly of getting lunch at the Busy Bee Tea Room in Danbridge, sixteen miles ahead, and a brief, cool respite from blazing pavements. The midday July sun was bearing down; heat waves radiated from the concrete pavement, and he was grateful for the dark-lensed goggles that protected his eyes from the glare.

The highway climbed a sharp rise, where there was a deep cut in clay banks at the summit, and Beane slowed his pace, swinging in behind a light farm truck that was fanning up the hill at good speed.

Passing at the spot might be safe enough this time, but there was a state law against it, and Trooper Beane was an apostle in favor of those neat, warning signs posted along the right-of-way about passing on hills and curves.

The truck had almost reached the summit when an oil truck loomed over the divide, from the opposite direction.

Then Beane swore and jammed on brakes, pulling sharply to the right.

A second car, a big sedan, came hurtling over the summit at a roaring pace of seventy or better, cutting around the oil truck. Beane had visions of a three-car wreck right under his nose. It didn't seem possible that the sedan could squeeze between the slower moving vehicles, about to pass each other.

The driver of the farm truck was quick-witted, and with death rushing at him, whipped the truck into the shallow ditch beyond the shoulder, plowing fenders and superstructure into the clay bank.

With only inches to spare the sedan skimmed past, swaying sickeningly as the driver straightened out after a screaming application of brakes, a futile gesture had the truck driver not made his desperate move.

Beane made a standing-up stop with the front wheel of his bike nosing the left rear tire of the truck as it stopped dead with the rending sound of torn fenders.

He caught a glimpse of the strained, white faces of four men in the sedan as it whipped past, then the big car roared on its reckless way.

The trooper put his bike on the lean-

ing prop, and ran to the front of the farm truck. The driver of the oil truck had applied air brakes in an emergency stop, too, and came hustling back.

The driver of the light truck, a youth of eighteen, was rubbing his lower ribs and groaning. An elderly man beside him was mopping at a crimson-streaming nose. Evidently he had been thrown against the windshield framework.

"The damn' crazy monkeys!" the oil man fumed, panting up. "Guys like that ought to be ruled off the roads. You hurt, son?"

"J-just the w-wind knocked out of me!" the youth gasped. "Gosh! I thought Pop an' me were gone, that time!"

"You stick here and see that they're all right!" Beane snapped at the oil man. "I'm going to catch that sedan, and tell that driver something!"

He raced to his motorbike, wheeled it about and kicked off the motor. Under full throttle he roared down the grade in pursuit of the scudding sedan, now a receding dark speck down the highway.

THE sedan was doing its best, but the speedy, sturdy equipment the State furnished its troopers was faster. The motorbike closed up the gap until Beane could make out and memorize numbers on the sedan's rear license-plate. It was an out-of-state license.

He saw, too, that the two men in the rear of the sedan were watching his approach, their heads bobbing before the rear window of the swaying machine.

Beane grunted when the sedan slowed its pace slightly. He'd give that driver some straight talk about highway hazards, and if there was any

back talk, hale him before the magistrate in the next village.

The motorbike nosed alongside the sedan. Beane slowed down his speed to keep abreast, sticking out a warning arm that meant STOP!

He glimpsed a pale, ratty face under the brim of a pulled-down hat, and then the driver swung the big car deliberately to spill him!

Beane avoided the collision, all right, but it meant heading sharply across the pavement. At the speed he was traveling it wasn't possible to stop.

The motorbike hurdled the clay shoulder, dived into a ditch, and the trooper went spinning over the handlebars in a sprawling flight that banged him, a tangle of arms and legs, on the sun-baked ditch bank.

His next conscious impression was awakening to find his head pillowed in the ample lap of a motherly, elderly lady who was clucking her distress, while a charming young person, a daughter probably, mopped his face with a handkerchief.

Beane sat up dizzily, and saw their car, pulled up on the shoulder. He glimpsed also the twisted wreck of his motorbike in the ditch, motor smoking.

"Mercy, young man! I always did say you officers rode your machines too fast!" the elderly woman ejaculated.

Beane felt gingerly of arms and legs. Nothing seemed to be broken, although he ached all over. Blood trickled from a gash on the bridge of his nose, where smashed goggles had cut. A shoulder pained bitingly, and the tight knees of his uniform trousers were both wrecked. He scrambled to his feet and swayed a little.

"Thanks!" he said heartily. "For the first aid. Did you see anything of a big gray sedan, doing seventy maybe, as you come along?"

"Why—we passed a car going awfully fast, six or eight miles back," the girl told him, round-eyed. "It was swaying so, I was scared when we passed it!"

"That's the car I was chasing!" the trooper muttered warmly. "They tried to run me down when I was stopping them, and I had to take the ditch. I wonder if you could get me to a phone?"

"We're going into Danbridge," the elderly woman told him. "There might be a phone at the oil station between here and the town. Are you sure you're not hurt, young man?"

"Scratches and bruises, mostly," Beane grinned reassuringly. "I got my wind back now. If you don't mind—"

He broke off to stare up the highway, in the direction from which he had started the chase.

A big touring car was approaching, the roaring motor advertising its speed. The car swayed on the pavement.

"Another one in a hurry!" Beane snapped, and stepped out to the edge of the pavement, raising his arm.

Brakes screamed. The touring car lurched sickeningly, but the driver brought it to a tire-smoking stop a few yards beyond the spot where Beane's motorcycle lay in the ditch.

A man spilled from the rear of the car and ran back. There was a metal star pinned on the breast of his shirt. Beane recognized Dave Echols, a deputy sheriff from Danbridge.

The deputy's eyes swept over the scratched and disheveled trooper curiously.

"Howdy, Beane! Did you see a gray sedan pass here in the last ten minutes?" he demanded excitedly. "Traveling fast, with four men in it?"

"Did I—say, Dave! Are you chasing that car?"

"I'll say! Sheriff Dodd's driving us. Those four guys stuck up the bank at Danbridge and killed Lou Parsons, the cashier! We phoned all along the line before we took out after them and they'll be stopped somewhere, I reckon."

Beane jerked about to the staring ladies. "Thanks for everything!" he flung at them. "I'll ride with this car!"

At a limping run he scudded for the stopped touring car, the deputy pounding in after him.

A thick-set man at the wheel, whose florid face was grim and stern, was leaning over the door to stare back impatiently. There was another man in the front seat beside him, armed with a rifle.

Beane flung himself into the rear of the touring car, the deputy scrambling in after him.

"Light out, Sheriff!" the trooper bade eagerly. "I want to be in at the finish, if you do overtake those fellows in that gray sedan!"

THE speedometer needle on the touring car's instrument board crept up to sixty-five and trembled there after the machine got under way.

Beane leaned over the front seat and shouted a brief explanation of his experiences into the sheriff's ear, while the officer humped grimly over the wheel.

"They're bad, all right!" the sheriff shouted back. "They got two tommy-guns and plenty of pistols. They shot Lou Parsons and there wasn't no occasion for it. We're glad to have you along, trooper! We'll need you, maybe, if we catch 'em!"

"You think there's a chance?" Beane bawled, to be heard over the rushing wind and the roar of the labor-

ing engine. "They were doing seventy or better, when I sighted them!"

"I phoned the constable at Cummings," the sheriff told him. "He runs a filling station on the highway there. I told him to barricade the pavement and head 'em off if he could."

Beane dropped back beside the deputy Echols. "They're heading for Bluff City," he confided an opinion. "Plenty of chance to hide out there, if they can make it."

"Ed Bardell's smart, and plenty game," the deputy growled. "He had time to set a trap for 'em after we phoned. He'll head 'em, I reckon."

Some minutes later, when the sheriff's touring car roared into the little village of Cummings, they saw that there was a formidable and impassable barrier across the highway, between two stores fronting there. An oil truck with a trailer had served the purpose nicely.

There were half a dozen stopped cars this side of the barrier, but there was no gray touring car in the lot.

A lanky man with a big bone-handled revolver holstered at his hip came striding to meet the sheriff's car when it slid to a stop.

"Where's your bandits?" he demanded gravely. "They haven't never got here yet!"

The sheriff swore amazedly, the two deputies echoing his emotions.

"Why, dang it, they must have got by you, Ed! There ain't no crossroads for 'em to turn off on since they were last seen!" the astounded officer protested.

"Nope. There wasn't no gray sedan traveling fast come through here," the constable shook his head. Other men crowding about nodded verification.

Sheriff Dodd turned about to stare at Deputy Echols.

"How far back is it to where we picked up the trooper, Dave?" he demanded.

"'Bout fourteen mile, maybe further," the deputy stated blankly. "Where do you suppose those fellows went?"

"I noticed some lanes on both sides of the highway," Beane put in. "Are you sure it wouldn't be possible for them to take a cut over to some other main road?"

"Not a chance!" the sheriff shook his head. "The Hatchie River bottoms parallel the highway on the south, not more than a mile or two from the right-of-way. There's no bridges over the river and no roads a car could travel to the bottoms. And those lanes on the north just lead to farms in the hills, and peter out."

"They're smart," Beane said grimly. "They figured the alarm would be phoned ahead and they'd run into trouble. They've ducked off the road to hide in the woods somewhere until dark. Then they'll try a break. They'll stop a tourist or somebody and swap cars."

Sheriff Dodd's jaw set grimly. "There ain't anything to do but try and find 'em!" he asserted soberly, "And that'll be something of a job. Ed, you keep things bottled up here. You can let honest people pass, swinging through your oil station. We'll backtrack for them bandits."

"You'll best phone to Danbridge, Bardwell," Beane suggested quickly, "and have someone keep a lookout there. They may try doubling back. It's an old dodge."

"Get my deputy on the phone, Ed," the sheriff paused in the job of backing around. "Tell him to form a posse and guard the highway coming into town."

"Sure," the constable nodded. "I'll do that, then I'm going to turn things over to the marshal here. I'll round up some good men and we'll come help smoke out them skunks."

At a crawling pace, the big touring car headed back in the direction of Danbridge. Eager eyes studied carefully both sides of the highway. Stops were made whenever a rutted side lane branched away, and the dust examined for traces of fresh tire tracks.

Beane, who had been reared in the adjoining county, knew people and surroundings fairly well over this way. He had been doing some earnest thinking, since they'd left Ed Bardell's oil truck barrier. They had covered some six crawling miles when he voiced his thoughts.

"Don't old Bill Pearsall live somewhere hereabouts, Dave?" he inquired of his seatmate.

"Yeah, the old devil's farm is next the Tucker place, 'bout three miles along," Dodd replied. "What made you think of Bill Pearsall, Beane?"

"I wasn't thinking so much about old Bill," Beane said. "But I was remembering that when I was eating lunch in the Busy Bee one day last week, I thought I saw Jake Pearsall passing the place."

The sheriff turned off the pavement onto the shoulder and brought the touring car to an abrupt stop. He twisted about in his seat, staring at the trooper.

"Jake Pearsall got out of the pen about ten days ago," he said thoughtfully. "I heard he was home with the old man for a spell. But I haven't seen him hanging around town. He ain't right well thought of in Danbridge."

"Jake was a tough kid," Beane said.

"I hardly recognized him the other day, and he looked meaner, if anything. About the eyes, anyhow. Three years in the pen didn't improve him much, I'm guessing, and he'd likely strike up some friendships with tougher eggs there."

"Are you thinking, Beane, that maybe Jake Pearsall had a hand in this stick-up?" the sheriff demanded eagerly.

"The Danbridge State Bank is one of the best little banks in this part of the state," the trooper reminded. "They keep a snug lot of cash on hand. Jake would know about that. He may have gotten some pals to come here and help him job the bank."

"By golly, I believe the trooper's got it!" Dave Echols exclaimed. "That Pearsall cub is a no-good 'un if I ever saw one! Shove on, and let's have a look at the lane that leads to old Bill's place!"

Four and one-half minutes later, the touring car stopped beside the highway, opposite a rutted lane rambling off through scrubby pasture, guarded by a wire gap gate.

Dave Echols and the trooper got out and examined the powdery dust in the ruts. The marks of broad tires, recently impressed there, were plainly visible.

"There's been a car turned in here lately, Sheriff!" Dave straightened up excitedly. "The tires are a whole lot bigger'n old John's flivver tires!"

"Take down the gap, Dave," the sheriff ordered shortly. "I reckon we'll go up and pay Bill Pearsall a visit!"

THE touring car jounced and bumped along the rutty lane.

Looking ahead, Beane hadn't seen a habitation of any description decorating the washed-out pasture hills.

"Old Bill's house is 'bout three-quarters of a mile on," Dave Echols told him. "You can't see it, 'til we top this little ridge. He don't do much farming, except in the creek-bottom land to the north of him."

"Bill Pearsall always was a cantankerous devil," the sheriff growled. "He's been a troublemaker all his life, and the cub inherits his mean disposition. I've never had to arrest Bill Pearsall, but if he's harboring crooks, I'll jug him, all right!"

"The old devil's lived alone on the farm, since his woman died and Jake was put away," Dave Echols explained eagerly. "It wouldn't be a bad place for them skunks to hole up, 'til dark, and Jake is mean smart enough to have figured that out."

"I just hope we find the gang there!" the man with the rifle said bitterly.

He hadn't had a lot to say, all along. He was Charles Rawles, a brother-in-law of the slain bank cashier, and had been sworn in as a special deputy by Sheriff Dodd.

The touring car bounced along to the peak of the ridge, and started down the opposite slope.

Beane could see a square, weather-beaten house then, topping a knoll, with a barn and other small outbuildings on the rather steeply sloping sides of the knoll. He studied the place keenly as the touring car rolled down the ridge.

A few chickens scratched around the house; a pair of mules lay in the dust of the barn lot and a despondent-looking cow stood in the shade of the sole scrubby tree on the premises.

There were no other signs of life about the place.

The lane led to the fenced-in enclosure about the house, comprising better than an acre. A gate there was

not far from the barn. The sheriff brought the car to a dead stop and the four stared at the house.

"Don't 'pear to be anybody home," Dave Echols muttered disappointedly. "It ain't likely old Bill is down in the creek bottom plowing, a hot day like this."

"We'll have a look in the barn," the sheriff grunted, "and then we'll see who's at home. The car tracks lead here, all right!"

THEY got out of the car and headed for the barn, all eyes on the house, seventy yards distant up the slope of the knoll. There still were no signs of life there, and the touring car had made plenty of noise; enough to announce the arrival of visitors to anyone in the house.

Beane stopped at the rear corner of the barn, studying the house with wrinkled brow. Rawles halted, too, but the sheriff and the deputy kept on for a small open door in the back of the barn.

Dave Echols carried a riot shotgun under his arm and was visibly eager.

"Looks like your hunch was all wrong, Trooper," Rawles remarked gloomily. "It don't appear to me that there are any bandits close about here."

An eager shout came from the interior of the barn. Beane and Rawles hurried through the little door, and found the sheriff and Dave Echols standing beside a gray sedan.

"We got 'em, Trooper!" the deputy exclaimed. "They're still around here somewhere. There's Bill Pearsall's old flivver, so they didn't switch to that!"

Beane eyed the smaller car briefly, his eyes going back to the license plates on the gray sedan. It was the car that had so nearly run him down, all right.

The wide doors in the front of the

barn were closed. Beyond the dilapidated flivver stood a fair-sized farm tractor, covered with a piece of tarpaulin. Other farm gear stood about, in a fairly orderly way.

"Come on!" the deputy chortled. "Let's go get 'em!"

"Hold on a minute!" Beane warned. "Don't forget those chaps have tommy-guns, and that they've got a murder rap on top of the stick-up business. If they're in the house, they're not going to let you walk in on 'em, Dave."

"That's sense, Dave," the sheriff agreed, and frowned. "It's funny they'd let us get this close, Beane, and lay low that way!"

"They've let us come up, but it'll be mighty easy to hold us here," the trooper said soberly, remembering how the house on the knoll commanded the sloping approaches. "It looks like we've walked into a trap, ourselves."

Beane walked over to a dusty window in the side of the barn. He could get a partial view of the back of the house, and the low porch before the rear door. The others joined him and peered over his shoulders.

The sun blazed on the other side of the square house. The back side was shaded. They couldn't see through windows beyond the rusted screening.

Slowly the trooper unbuttoned the flap of his belt holster. Dave Echols leaned the riot gun against a bench, jerked out his revolver.

"One of you fellows can take the shotgun," he declared. "I can handle this baby better."

Rawles pumped a shell into the chamber of his repeating rifle.

"What are we waiting for?" he demanded shortly. "Lou Parson's killer is in that house!"

"Now, look here, Charlie!" the

sheriff warned mildly. "Don't be getting rash. I want those fellows as bad as you do, but Beane's got the right idea. They've got some advantages, and I don't like it."

Dave Echols, with a grunt, hurried through the little door, gun in hand.

"Come back here, you damned fool!" the sheriff called, but the deputy was gone. The three hurried after him. Echols already had rounded the corner of the barn, was headed for the house.

**B**EANE and the sheriff burst from the shelter of the barn just when Echols reached a wooden watering trough, mounted on a concrete foundation, twenty feet before the barn. The deputy was headed for a gate in the barn lot fencing.

Without warning, a submachine gun began chattering at the house. Puffs of smoke filtered through a rusty window screen.

Dave Echols stumbled, then pitched down in the muck behind the watering trough. He rolled on his back, clutching his breast, the revolver slipping from his fingers.

The big service gun in Beane's hand kicked, sending slugs toward the house, almost before he realized that he was firing. The sheriff's gun roared out beside him and the rifle whanged out three shots as Charlie Rawles joined them in throwing blind lead toward that window.

More puffs of smoke sifted from another window. Splinters flew from the side of the barn, leaden bees zipped close to the trooper's ears.

Charlie Rawles gasped and half spun about, then staggered for the shelter of the barn. The sheriff and Beane wasted no time darting after him.

The trooper caught Rawles' arm, dragging him around the corner.

"In the leg!" Rawles gritted. "We were damn' fools to give them a chance like that!"

They helped him into the barn. The tommy-gun had stopped chattering at the house. Beane half dragged the wounded man to a box behind the gray sedan and eased him down there.

The sheriff, swearing monotonously, started for the front of the barn, then ducked for shelter when splinters ripped from inside the wide doors and lead whined. They were firing from the house again. Sunlight gleamed through a dozen holes bored in the barn doors. Glass tingled when the side window smashed. Then it was suddenly quiet again.

Trooper Beane, his face grim, keen brain working hard at the job of thinking, slit Charlie Rawles' pant leg and with the man's torn-up shirt, twisted a tourniquet above the bleeding wound in his thigh. Then he rudely bandaged the wound.

The sheriff came sliding back from having a look out before the barn, through cracks at the front.

"Dave Echols is lying out there," he rumbled hotly, "shot up bad! He's alive, because I saw him move, hitching closer to the base of the trough for shelter. We got to do something, Beane!"

"We can't get to the car and go for help," the trooper gritted. "They'd mow us down if we tried it. One of us might sneak out behind the barn, but couldn't get far until they'd spot him down hill and give him a burst. We walked into it all right, Sheriff!"

"They can keep us here until dark," Dodd said soberly, "and then rush us, or make a sneak for it, whichever they want to do. Dave'll bleed to death out there, trooper, and we can't do a thing for him!"

"There's just one chance in a thousand that Ed Bardell will notice where we left the highway," Beane muttered, "when he comes along with his men. If we had only thought to leave a marker there!"

Charlie Rawles said: "I'm afraid I won't be much help, but I can still shoot my rifle, if you'll get me where I can see the house."

The sheriff kicked an empty box that rolled over and settled down topside up. The trooper's puckered eyes fell on the box, that had a new appearance. He read bold red lettering on the side, and leaned forward a little tensely.

He'd remembered seeing another box like that, under the work bench at the side of the barn, when they first came in.

He hurried to the bench, stooped and pulled out the box. Eagerly he plunged his fingers into the sawdust-filled interior, pawing up short sticks of blasting dynamite. The sheriff came curiously to see what he was doing just when Beane dug out coiled fuse and percussion caps.

"Old Bill must have been blasting stumps in new creek bottom land," Dodd remarked dully. "A lot of good that stuff will do us!"

"You know anything about handling the stuff?" Beane inquired eagerly.

"I've blown a thousand stumps, I reckon, on my own place. Why?"

"You get some wire," the trooper raced, "and tie up three or four sticks of the stuff. Cut a short fuse and rig it up. I got an idea that we can make use of this dynamite!"

The sheriff stared for a moment, then without question gathered up four sticks of the dynamite and looked about for wire.

Beane slid over across the barn to the tractor. He yanked the tarpaulin

from it and examined the thing. Looked into the fuel tank and found gas there. The battery was in place and looked hot.

Before his appointment to the State Police, Courtney Beane had farmed with his father in Hardin County. He could operate a tractor, and if this one could be started up, the dynamite idea that had sprung white-hot into his brain might work.

"HERE'S your dynamite bomb," the sheriff held out the bundle with the short fuse sticking out. "I wish you'd tell me what the hell you think you're doing!"

For some feverish minutes the trooper had been hard at work, with stout wires and a cumbersome mule-power dirt scoop from which he had removed the attached singletree.

He was fastening the scoop to the tractor now, in such a way that it made a shield for anybody operating the machine. He grinned at the puzzled sheriff without stopping work.

"If you ever read your World War history, Sheriff, you'll remember that the tanks were very effective in mopping up machine-gun nests," he explained hurriedly. "That scoop will turn tommy-gun slugs nicely, I'm figuring. In just about five minutes you're going to see a tank go into action!"

"You — well, I'll be damned!" Sheriff Dodd's jaw dropped, then tightened grimly as his eyes began to sparkle.

Without further questioning, he began helping with the tightening of the guy wires the trooper was rigging. Presently the scoop stood the tests of Beane's husky shaking. It would ride, all right.

"There's a chance," he muttered grimly, "that a slug may smash the

distributor and put the engine out of commission before I reach the house. But I may be lucky. Let's see if we can start this thing."

He snapped on a switch and whirled the crank energetically. The engine caught, sputtered with sharp explosions and then settled down to a steady, business-like roar.

The tommy-guns began stuttering from the house. More slugs whined through the front of the barn. The bandits in the house quite likely were puzzled over hearing the tractor's roaring, but it wasn't probably they'd guess the shrewd trooper's plans.

"Give me a lift, Sheriff!" Beane was tugging at the topmost of a sack of sacked feed. "We'll make a barricade on the bench by the window. Mr. Rawles can take that post with his rifle and be a help."

They sweated profusely, swinging sacked grain onto the bench, leaving a chink for poking the rifle barrel through. Then Beane helped the amazed but interested Rawles over to the bench.

"You can cover the back of the house, Mr. Rawles," the trooper explained hastily. "Sheriff, if you'll climb up to the hayloft with the riot gun, I'll bet you can find a place to blast 'em if they break and try to get me from the side. One of you give me some matches. I don't carry them."

Rawles thrust matches at him. Beane thrust two between his teeth, others in a tight loop of his belt. He caught up the bundled dynamite and jumped aboard the tractor.

The sheriff, trailing the shotgun, scrambled up the ladder to the hayloft. Courtney Beane tugged at a lever on the tractor, opened the throttle.

"Here goes a couple of perfectly good barn doors!" he shouted, and sent

the unwieldy machine straight for the closed doors.

Undoubtedly the bandits entrenched in the square house got a paralyzing shock when the big barn doors splintered and burst from their tracks, and they caught their first glimpse of that amazing contrivance when it waddled over the wreckage.

They'd hardly recovered by the time the queer-looking thing had crossed the barn lot and snapped through strands of the wire fence, headed for the back door of the house.

Then the tommys opened up and slugs clanged on the scoop; whined and ricocheted with eerie screamings. The tank waddled grimly on. Slugs riddled the radiator, water spurted, but fortunately no vital part of the roaring engine was harmed.

Beane, crouched behind his armor-plate, was safe from direct front fire. By bearings he could see around his shield he was heading straight for his objective.

Behind him, he heard Rawles' rifle whang; saw a man with a flaming automatic in his hand crumple in the dust and writhe there. That chap's idea of running from the house for a side shot at the tractor driver hadn't been so good.

Beane guessed he wasn't far from the house now. The scoop shuddered under the impact of raining slugs, but remained in place. Steam plumed from the boiling radiator, draining of water. But the tractor waddled on.

Then the trooper could see corners of the house looming on either side of his scoop shield. He throttled down, but let the tractor keep moving as he reached for the crude bomb.

He couldn't see the man who popped from the back door, tommy-gun in hand, but he did hear the roar of the

riot gun and buckshot whistled dangerously close over his head. The man dropped the tommy-gun and reeled back into the house, but Beane didn't know about that.

He was lighting the fuse of the bomb, and thinking that Sheriff Dodd had cut that fuse damned close!

The front broad wheels of the tractor struck the low porch, crunching wood. Beane threw out the clutch, tossed his bomb over the scoop shield and straight ahead, then crouched as he cut the engine switch.

THEY told him afterwards how good his blind aim had been. The bundled dynamite had sailed squarely into the kitchen.

When it let go, concussion tore the scoop shield from supports and it banged down, giving Beane's head a smart rap. Timbers rained down for seconds. The blast blew the entire back end from the house, wrecking it.

Dizzy from the rap on the head, Trooper Beane scrambled out of a mess of splintered timbers and viewed the results of his strategy.

For seconds his jaw sagged. Then, through the haze of plaster dust and smoke, he saw a movement, and plunged through the debris, gun stiffly ahead of him.

The man who was bewilderedly crawling from beneath the wreckage of a partition wall had no fight in him, though. Blinded by blood streaming from a gashed forehead, he couldn't even see the trooper when Beane knocked an automatic pistol away.

Sheriff Dodd, leaping from the hay-loft window, came lumbering, gun in hand. Together he and Trooper Beane looked about and found the bodies of three more men, who wouldn't occasion the State any expense for trial.

Charlie Rawles limped up, dragging a leg and using the rifle for a crutch. The sheriff, looking out at him through twisted timbers, shook his head, indicating that the man could be of no further help.

Presently, leading the man Beane had disarmed, the two officers came out of the wrecked house. Charlie Rawles stared at the sinful, blood-stained countenance of old Bill Pearsall.

Sheriff Dodd glanced down the slope at the sprawled body of the man Rawles had shot.

"That's Jake Pearsall," he said grimly. "You got one for Lou by yourself anyhow, Charlie!"

Then he stared at the tractor.

"Kind of handy things," he grunted. "Reckon I'd better get one for jail equipment."



*Secret Loveliness*

Tiny glints of gold  
make dull hair  
romantic .....

USE  
**MARCHAND'S**  
GOLDEN HAIR WASH

# ILLUSTRATED CRIMES

by STOOKIE ALLEN

## THE BOY GRAVEDIGGER

ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD JIMMY MORRILL WENT TO BED LATE, THAT NIGHT IN JUNE, 1934, AFTER PLAYING CARDS WITH HIS PARENTS. HE DIDN'T KNOW THAT HIS MOTHER AND FATHER BEGAN TO QUARREL, AS HAD BECOME THEIR CUSTOM, OR THAT THE AGING, HALF-INDIAN MARY MORRILL, GOADED INTO A FRENZY, HAD SEIZED AN AXE AND HACKED HER HUSBAND TO DEATH.



**Jimmy Morrill**

BUT THE NEXT MORNING, JIMMY KNEW, ALL TOO WELL. A GRISLY OBJECT—HIS FATHER'S BLOOD-SOAKED BODY—LAY ON A BED WRAPPED IN A BLANKET. IN THE KITCHEN, HIS MOTHER WAS BOILING AN AX-HEAD IN HOT WATER, MUTTERING DAZEDLY: "I DID IT, WITH THIS AXE. I'M GLAD I DID IT. NOW OUR TROUBLES ARE OVER."



IT WAS A FRIGHTFUL SHOCK TO THE LAD. HE CRIED, BROKENHEARTEDLY WHILE HIS MOTHER COOLLY PREPARED HIS BREAKFAST. THEN SHE ASKED HIM TO BRING HIS TOY WAGON IN FROM THE FRONT YARD. JIMMY OBEYED DUTIFULLY, HELPED HER HAUL THE BODY INTO A CELLAR. HE EVEN THREW SEVERAL SHOVELFUL OF EARTH ON HIS FATHER'S REMAINS AS MARY MORRILL ORDERED. SHE THEN SWORE HIM TO SILENCE.



**MARY MORRILL**

COMING NEXT WEEK—



JIMMY STOOD MUTE WHEN CLIFFORD HAMILTON, THE MURDERED HERBERT MORRILL'S SON-IN-LAW, STOPPED SEVERAL DAYS LATER TO INQUIRE FOR HIM. MRS. MORRILL EXPLAINED VAGUELY THAT HER HUSBAND HAD "GONE AWAY SOME PLACE". HAMILTON CALLED THE AUTHORITIES, AND A SEARCH OF THE HOUSE IN THE LITTLE MAINE VILLAGE OF WEST FALMOUTH, LED TO THE DISCOVERY OF MORRILL'S CORPSE IN THE CELLAR.

ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH THE MURDER, STOLID MARY MORRILL ADMITTED NOTHING. BUT THE BOY WAS READY TO TALK OF THE HORROR WHICH HAD PREYED UPON HIS MIND. AT A TRIAL IN PORTLAND, QUIVERING WITH GREAT SOBS, HE EXPOSED THE WHOLE SORDID BUSINESS. TEARFULLY HE RELATED HOW HERBERT MORRILL HAD LONG ILL-USED BOTH HIS MOTHER AND HIMSELF.

BUT THE JURY OF NEW ENGLANDERS, SHOCKED BY THE WOMAN'S CALLOUS EMPLOYMENT OF THE BOY IN THE GORY BURIAL, SENTENCED HER TO PRISON FOR LIFE. JIMMY, DOOMED TO A TERRIBLE MEMORY FOREVER, WAS PLACED IN A PRIVATE HOME AT THE STATE'S EXPENSE SO THAT HE MIGHT DEVELOP PROPERLY AND NORMALLY.

## THE SUBWAY STATION MURDER

# The Perfect Victim



By

J. Lane Linklater

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*Paul C. Pitt, Modern Robin Hood and Inventor of Smart Methods, Comes to Grips with an Unscrupulous Banker—and Faces the Toughest Problem of His Mad, Perambulating Career*

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THERE was a smile on the handsome face of Paul C. Pitt as he spoke to the huge chauffeur behind the wheel; he knew that he was inviting an argument.

"Stop here, Dan," he said.

Dan brought the limousine to a stop against the curb of Buling's main

street, which was less than two blocks long. There was both worry and bewilderment on Dan's bullock-like face. He had never become accustomed to Pitt's tendency to stop on their travels in the small cities along the highway, and this town of Buling was scarcely more than a village. The odor of horse-corral was noticeable in the late afternoon air. The houses were built like old-style farm houses. The stores along the main street looked like shacks. Even the one bank, in front of which they were parked, had the appearance of a barn given a plate-glass front.

"Gee, boss," pleaded Dan, "of all the—"

Pitt held up a graceful hand. "I know what you're going to say, Dan. You're going to tell me that the representatives of the law in these small

places are inquisitive, and that we, being strangers, will be conspicuous. You're going to tell me that everybody in town will notice us—"

"They sure will, boss. Why, the hicks are staring outa the store windows right now. They'll be getting on their phones and passing the word along. Even the farmers out in the country will know about us."

Pitt went on serenely, as if he hadn't been interrupted: "You're also going to tell me that there's no activity worth looking for in a place like this—that there's no excitement, and no money—"

"Well, ain't it the truth? If you didn't pass out the dough like you do, maybe we could afford to forget it. But—"

"There's a bank here," Pitt pointed out, with a smile.

Dan squirmed uneasily. "Sure. But that ain't your racket."

"True. But there's drama here, Dan—drama under the most placid surfaces. Drama — and misplaced wealth! Besides, it's a beautiful spot. We're in a sort of mountain valley. The products of nature are no doubt abundant. And those bare-looking mountain sides in the distance indicate mineral wealth. Yes, it's a beautiful spot."

"Okay," muttered Dan. "You win. Looks like there's one crummy hotel down the street there—"

"For a few moments," Pitt said contentedly, "we'll just sit here."

Dan's frown was puzzled, but he said nothing. Pitt leaned back against the rich cushions and watched, without apparent purpose, people coming out of the drug store, which adjoined the bank. There were women and boys and old men. But Pitt's keen gray eyes remained somnolent until a man of per-

haps fifty, poorly dressed, but tall and straight and with something of half-beaten pride in his bearing, emerged and walked away.

Pitt's gaze followed him for a little while. "Interesting case," he murmured.

Dan looked startled. "Why, that guy looks like he ain't got a dime in the world!"

"He probably hasn't, Dan," conceded Pitt. "But that is beside the point. In a case like this, there is little that is tangible to judge from; one must use the seventh sense of discernment." He stirred. "I'll be back shortly."

HE pushed open the door and stepped to the rough sidewalk.

The few natives of Buling who were on the street had been staring at the limousine, whose stately splendor was made more vivid by the drabness of the town. Now they gazed at Pitt, whose long legs were taking him at an easy stride into the drug store—staring at him as if no such human had ever crossed their vision before.

Pitt swiftly approached the clerk, an old man in shirtsleeves.

"A few cigars, please," said Pitt.

Apparently speechless, the clerk pulled open the case. Pitt took a handful of cigars and dropped a twenty-dollar bill on the glass top. The clerk fumbled for change.

"By the way," said Pitt, "I used to know a man who lives here. His name escapes me, but he was tall and had sandy hair. There was a scar down the left side of his neck—"

"You mean Torn Lake," blurted the clerk.

"Lake—that's it!" agreed Pitt. "A fine fellow!"

"One of the best," agreed the clerk.

"Why, Tom just left here, not three minutes ago. That scar—he got it a long time ago, pulling his partner out of a shaft they had sunk back in them hills. Dang near killed him, too—"

"That's right," Pitt said softly. "And is Tom still—prospecting?"

The clerk shook his head. "I dunno. He was until about a couple of weeks ago, but—well, things has changed since then."

Pitt was fingering his change carelessly. "Then, I take it, things are not going so well with him now?"

"No, not now," said the clerk. He seemed disinclined to go into further detail.

"I'd like to see him," Pitt reflected.

The clerk jabbed an explanatory finger. "Lives around the corner. First turn to the left, then the third house on the right."

Pitt thanked him with grave courtesy and returned to the limousine. He told Dan to take the first turn to the left and stop at the third house on the right.

"I don't get it, boss," Dan grumbled. "The grapevine is already busy—"

Pitt chuckled. "The free movement of information," he remarked, "is one of the charms of a place like this. Everybody knows about everybody else. And there's no greater storehouse of information than the drug store." His eyes strayed back to the store. "However, when people like my friend inside stop talking, there's usually a reason — something they're afraid of—"

"Who could they be afraid of in a—"

"Usually," said Pitt, "it's the banker."

Dan started the car. In a few moments they were parked in front of a

very old, low-built house with ivy covering the sides, and well-kept garden beds in front.

"You'd better come with me, Dan," said Pitt.

Mumbling, Dan accompanied him. Pitt wielded the old-fashioned knocker. The door opened presently and Pitt was looking down into the kindly face of a middle-aged woman. She seemed a little abashed as she saw Pitt.

"Mrs. Lake?" queried Pitt, in his softly-resonant tones.

"Yes, sir."

Pitt's gaze wandered for a moment to the room beyond. Standing in the room was the tall man he had seen coming out of the drug store.

"Mrs. Lake," Pitt said gently, "you can do my man and me a great favor."

"I—I'm afraid I don't understand," faltered Mrs. Lake.

"We're traveling through the country," Pitt explained. "And we'd like to stop here overnight. I am tired—and my man is hungry."

Mrs. Lake's eyes traveled to Dan's hulking form just behind Pitt.

"You were recommended, Mrs. Lake," Pitt went on, "as the best cook

in Bulging."

Mrs. Lake smiled again. "Well, but I don't—"

"My man here," Pitt continued, "has much trouble with his stomach. I'm sure he couldn't stand the cooking at the hotel."

Dan looked embarrassed, but he grinned.

"I'm sorry," said Mrs. Lake, "but we have very little in the house, I'm afraid. I'm not prepared to—"

"Naturally," cut in Pitt. "My idea was that you would kindly permit me to buy the food, so that you could cook it. It would be worth at least twenty dollars to me."

Mrs. Lake's lips seemed to tremble a little at the mention of the money. She was, apparently, on the point of yielding. But the man standing in the room came forward, put his hand on his wife's shoulder.

"My dear," he said, "you work too hard as it is—"

"I appreciate your point of view, Mr. Lake," put in Pitt quickly. "But I beg you to remember that Dan and I are strangers."

TOM LAKE'S eyes were on him steadily. There was much pride in the carriage of his rugged-shaped head. But Pitt had touched him at a spot more vital than his pride. He smiled, then.

"Well, I was never in the habit of turning away strangers. So, if Mary wants to do it—"

"Of course I do," smiled Mrs. Lake. "Bring your things in. We'll do our best to make you comfortable."

"You make us very happy," murmured Pitt. "And I—"

He stopped abruptly. A young woman was coming up the walk. She was small and trim, and cleanly pretty, with clear blue eyes and a sensitive mouth.

"My daughter, Anna," said Mrs. Lake. "This is Mr. Pitt, Anna. He and—the other gentleman, are staying with us tonight."

The girl's smile was a little puzzled, but friendly.

"Splendid!" exclaimed Pitt. "Perhaps Anna will show me where to buy the food!"

"Of course she will!" said Mrs. Lake. She explained to Anna, then turned to Pitt again. "We buy most of our stuff from neighbor people. They raise—"

"We'll start right now!" said Pitt.

And for half an hour Pitt and the girl drove about the town, buying here and there, so that when they returned the limousine was well loaded. An undercurrent of seriousness which Pitt had first noticed in Anna was, by this time, coated with a sudden gayety, and by the time dinner was ready they had become good friends.

Just before dinner, Dan met Pitt on the back porch. "Say, what the hell's the idea, boss?" he queried anxiously. "There ain't a chance in the world of making any dough—"

"But they're real people, Dan."

"Sure. Best in the world, boss. Kinda home folks, huh? But that don't help—"

"And they're in trouble, Dan. That much is certain. The old folks are too proud to discuss it, but perhaps we can induce the young lady to talk presently."

Dan grinned. "She's a nifty, all right," he approved. Then he frowned. "But don't get mixed up—"

Mrs. Lake appeared, smiling, announced dinner. After dinner, Anna helped her mother with the dishes, while Pitt engaged Tom Lake in conversation.

But, as he had anticipated, Lake would talk about anything except his own affairs. Presently the ladies joined them.

"By the way, Mrs. Lake," Pitt hazarded, "my man and I may be back in Buling soon. I hope you'll put us up again."

A quick glance passed between Tom Lake and his wife. Anna's lips twitched as if she were fighting back a desire to weep.

Then Mrs. Lake spoke: "Thank you, Mr. Pitt. But we—well, we'll do the best we can when the time comes."

"I'm sure you will," said Pitt. He glanced out of the window. Darkness.

now covered the town. "I'd like to take a stroll. But of course I don't know my way about. Would you mind guiding me, Anna?"

The girl glanced at her mother. "I—I'd be glad," she said.

Presently they walked out, started down the road. "I'm afraid there isn't much to see," said Anna. "It's a very small place—"

Pitt interrupted swiftly. "I'd like to explore," he said, "our own difficulties."

She caught her breath. "I—I don't understand—"

"You and your good people," Pitt said, "are in trouble. Perhaps I can help you. But I can do nothing unless you talk."

She walked along by his side for some time without a word. He took her arm and held it gently. Finally she spoke.

"I'm afraid there's no hope," she whispered.

"You have too much courage to give up," he challenged her. "Think of your mother and father—"

"I'll tell you!" cried the girl. "There's nothing to lose by that. Perhaps you can at least suggest something."

They had come to a large tree stump. She sat on it.

"Start at the beginning," suggested Pitt.

"It may sound silly to you," Anna said. "A young man wanted me to marry him. His name is Clarence Kupp, and his father is the banker here. But I don't even like him. I turned him down. His father blamed my father, so ever since he's hated dad."

"Well, dad is a fine prospector—everybody around here knows that. And for years he's been turning up claims that yielded enough to get by

on. But he's been looking, all this time, for some big body of ore, back in the hills. Some time ago he borrowed a thousand dollars on the house so that he could go on with it."

"He found this rich claim finally?"

"Not long ago. Of course, no claim is sure until it's been worked, but others have enough confidence in dad to advance him money on a claim that he believes in."

"Then its value is based largely on confidence in your father's judgment rather than any certain knowledge?"

"That's right. Well, this was a desolate spot, was back in the hills. He staked it out, set up his monument, walked back to where he had left his old car. But someone had done something to the car; it wouldn't run. He had to walk all the way back here. It took him nearly two days. And when he got back—"

She choked on a sob.

Pitt helped her: "Someone had already filed on the claim?"

"Yes!"

"Was it Clarence Kupp, the banker's son?"

"Yes. And, of course, Clarence has since assigned the claim to his father."

PITT ruminated. "Of course, I can see that Clarence could have worked it easily. He could get back to town in his own car, record the claim, then return and replace your father's monument with his own. But did anyone else know where your father was prospecting?"

"A worthless fellow by the name of Eggas," said the girl. "Dad had to have a little help in getting out there once, and foolishly he used Eggas. Of course, Eggas told the Kupps."

"Eggas," repeated Pitt. "We'll remember the name. He was silent a

little while. "The mortgage on the house is due soon?"

"In a week," Anna said bitterly. "The house that dad and mother have lived in since they were married!"

"So he loses both the house and the claim!" murmured Pitt. "And both to the banker!"

Anna was weeping silently. "Oh, I've told dad I'd marry Clarence, if it would do any good. But he won't hear of it. He—he'd be very angry if he knew that I'd talked to you."

"But I won't tell him," smiled Pitt. "You must trust me, Anna."

"I—I'm afraid I've told you too much," said Anna.

"I'm a stranger," Pitt pointed out. "And you should be good to strangers."

"But not trust them too much," Anna attempted to smile.

Pitt was standing very close to her. "It's a beautiful evening," he said in a low voice.

She got up hurriedly. "Too beautiful," she said: "We'd better go home."

They strolled silently back to the house. Tom Lake was sitting on the front porch. Anna entered the house. Pitt sat down with Lake.

"Mr. Lake," he said, "I'm afraid I haven't been quite honest with you."

Tom Lake looked at him. "Somehow," he said, "I'd trust you anywhere, Mr. Pitt, although I know you're a much smarter man than I am. In fact, I think you're the smartest man I ever met."

"Thank you," Pitt said gravely. "It may have occurred to you that I know something about mining, and that perhaps I'm interested in mining claims in this section."

"I didn't know," admitted Lake.

"Well, that's the truth," said Pitt. "Now, I want to acquire a claim that

has been worked and abandoned. Can you help me?"

Tom Lake thought a moment. "I'm not sure," he said, "that I know what you mean."

"I merely want to buy a worked-out claim," said Pitt. "Do you happen to have any?"

"Several," said Tom Lake. "The last one I had was close to the one that Kupp stole—that is, I mean, sir, it's quite a ways back in the hills."

"Would you take five hundred dollars for a sixty per cent interest in it?" Pitt inquired quickly.

Lake stared at him steadily. "The whole thing isn't worth a penny, let alone five hundred dollars," he said.

Pitt chuckled. "It's worth it to me," he said. "Indeed, Mr. Lake, I'd be deeply disappointed if you refused to sell."

TOM LAKE turned his head. From where he sat he could look into the little living room, where his wife and daughter were sitting. He seemed to be looking at them, and thinking very hard. He turned to Pitt again, and his voice was husky.

"I accept your offer. But only with the understanding that my opinion is that the claim is worthless."

Pitt shook hands with him. "That's splendid. "But," he added, "I'll want you to do something for me, Mr. Lake. And I'll want you to do it without question, exactly as I tell you."

Lake looked at him without speaking. "When is the next train to Galesburg?" Pitt asked.

"Galesburg? A few minutes after midnight."

"How long does it take to get there?"

"About six hours."

Pitt was staring at the stars. "And

when does the train leave Galesburg on the return trip?"

"At noon," said Lake.

The prospector was answering mechanically.

"Good," said Pitt. "Now, this is what I want you to do. You'll take the train at midnight tonight and go to Galesburg. At nine o'clock tomorrow morning you'll go to an address which I will give you—an outfitting concern—and tell them that I sent you. They'll know what to do. At ten o'clock you'll call your home here on the long distance phone and report."

Tom Lake was looking in the window again. "I'll do it," he said in a low voice.

"By the way," Pitt went on, "can I send a telegram from here?"

"Yes," said Lake. "The station agent sends and receives telegrams." He hesitated, looked at Pitt again. "But I should warn you, sir, that if you send a telegram, or get one, that has anything to do with—well, with mining hereabouts, the station agent maybe won't treat it confidential."

Pitt smiled. "Is there someone in particular who might be informed?"

"Yes," said Lake, shortly.

"Thank you. But I'll use a code. And now, Mr. Lake, we can go inside, and I'll pay you the cash right now in exchange for a document transferring to me a sixty per cent interest in that claim."

"You might just as well," Tom Lake said gloomily, "take the whole thing."

"I couldn't use," said Pitt, "more than sixty per cent."

INSIDE, the transaction was completed. Dan came in as Pitt was passing over five hundred dollars in currency, mumbled incoherently,

tramped out again. Mrs. Lake and the girl watched silently, uncomprehending.

Tom Lake spoke to his wife: "Mary, I'm making a trip tonight for Mr. Pitt. I leave on the midnight train, but I'll be back by evening tomorrow."

Unquestioning, Mrs. Lake got up and went to pack his bag.

Pitt spoke to Anna: "I have to send a telegram. Will you come with me to the depot?"

She smiled. "Of course. It's only two minutes' walk."

They strolled, wordless, to the almost-deserted railroad depot. A slim man, whose soggy cigar clung to his chin, slouched out of a chair.

"Larkin," said Anna, "this gentleman wants to send a message."

Pitt was already printing words on a blank. Presently he handed it to the station master, whose bulging eyes blinked in bewilderment as he read:

WILLIAM RAVVELOCK,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
TULIPS MACARONI BRIGHTYES  
KNOCK KNEES FASHION PLATE  
ON THE LAKE.

PAUL C. PITT.

"That's a funny one," squeaked the station master. "I couldn't make head nor tails of that."

"I'm sorry," smiled Pitt. "But the man who gets it may be able to read it." He threw a bill on the ledge. "Please send it at once."

He took Anna's arm. They walked out. For a little while they were silent. Before they reached home, however, Pitt spoke again.

"This chap Eggas," he said, "who told Clarence Kupp about your father's prospecting. Is he around town?"

"He's pretty sure," said Anna, "to be at the pool hall."

"I'd like to talk to him," said Pitt. "I'd much rather be walking with you, but just now business must come first. You just go on home. I'll be there soon."

She smiled up at him. "I'm still trusting you."

Pitt walked down the main street. Across the street was the dusty, unkempt pool hall. A boy was playing at the curb. Pitt motioned to the boy, showed a dollar bill.

"You know a young man named Eggas?" he asked.

"Why, sure, mister. He's right over in—"

Pitt handed him the dollar. "Go tell him I want to see him. Tell him I've got money for him."

Presently Eggas, furtive, dirty, dull-eyed, came out. Pitt walked around the back streets with him for fifteen minutes, talking smoothly. Presently they were back near the pool hall, but still out of reach of the one street light.

"You understand?" Pitt said. "You just tell your little story, as I've suggested. Don't answer any questions."

He handed the youth a twenty-dollar bill. Eggas took it avidly, his grin stupid. "Sure," he said. "I can do it easy."

"There will be two more of those for you tomorrow," Pitt went on, "on condition that I find you've done it right."

"Sure," said Eggas.

Pitt merely nodded, turned away. When he reached the house, Tom Lake was getting ready to leave for the train.

**I**N the morning, the breakfast which Mrs. Lake prepared seemed to agree hugely with Dan's sensitive stomach. Pitt, as usual, ate sparingly, and apparently unaware of Anna's eyes upon him.

They were just finishing breakfast when a boy brought in a telegram. Pitt handed him a bill, ripped open the telegram, read it:

PAUL C. PITT, BULING.  
SORRY YOU COULDN'T MAKE A  
BETTER DEAL BUT WE WILL GO  
THROUGH WITH IT STOP UNDER  
THE CIRCUMSTANCES WILL HAVE  
TO CUT YOUR COMMISSION IN  
HALF.  
RAVVELOCK.

Pitt, his face unrevealing, merely stuffed the yellow paper into his pocket and sipped his coffee.

It was nearly ten o'clock when Pitt met Dan on the back porch, just beyond the kitchen. Dan seemed worried.

"The old lady," mumbled Dan, "sure is a swell cook. But, geez, boss, I don't see how you're gonna make out. You give away most of your dough. You oughter take care of yourself, huh?"

Pitt was silent a moment. Then he nodded.

"You're right, Dan. I've got to take care of myself. But you can depend upon me this time."

Dan looked skeptical. "You—you mean—"

"I mean I'm not letting sympathy run away with me, Dan. I plan to make this set-up pay *me*!"

"Gee, that's swell! And all the time I thought you was falling hard for the little dame—"

"Don't worry, Dan," Pitt chuckled. "We'll be ready to leave in an hour or two. Have the baggage all packed."

He swung about and strode into the kitchen. He did not look around as he went through to the living room, so he did not see Anna standing behind the kitchen door, her lips trembling, a hurt look in her eyes. But in a few minutes he returned.

"Oh, here you are!" he said to her. "Would you do me a favor?"

"It's just possible," she said, in a very small voice.

He seemed not to notice the change in her. "Fine! I'm going around to the bank to see Mr. Kupp. But your father will phone from Galesburg. I won't be here. Will you bring me the message?"

She nodded slowly. He swung about, walked out. In a minute or two he was entering the Bank of Buling. There were two employes in the bank, a young man and a young woman. Sitting at a desk, partially concealed by a partition, was a short, broad man whose thin lips were twisted in a never-wearying smile, but whose eyes were fixed and cold with the chill cunning of an ancient fox.

Pitt shoved a fifty-dollar bill at the young man in the cage. "Will you break this for me?"

His voice was disinterested, a little bored. And there was something in his attitude that suggested dissatisfaction, as if he were disgruntled about something.

The man at the desk looked up, squinted around the partition. Pitt didn't appear to notice him. The young man was carefully counting out change.

Pitt thanked him, started to walk out. The man at the desk got up hurriedly, spoke in a wheedling voice: "Good morning, sir. Are you—er—properly served?"

Pitt turned, looked down at Mr. Kupp, president of the Bank of Buling, very casually. "Yes," he said. "Yes, thank you."

He started out. Kupp spoke again: "By the way, Mr. Pitt—"

One of Pitt's eyebrows was raised in surprise.

Kupp's laugh was a little nervous. "You see how it is in a place like this, Mr. Pitt. You're a rather distinguished stranger, and everyone notices you—talks about you." He hesitated, laughed again. "Why, it has even come to me that you are buying mining property in this section!"

Pitt smiled a little. "Only as an agent, sir, acting for others."

"But I—I was given to understand you were buying in your own name—that what you buy is your property."

"A method of convenience, sir," explained Pitt. "Just a temporary measure. The money is put up by others—always. All I get, sir, is a commission. Just a commission, sir. Well, thank you again—"

"Would you kindly step in, Mr. Pitt," urged Kupp. "After all, I'd like to make you feel at home in Buling. And perhaps—who knows?—we might do some business."

Pitt wondered a moment. "Very well," he said.

In a moment he was seated behind the partition with Mr. Kupp. For twenty minutes they talked in low tones, by which time they seemed to be getting along very well. Even Pitt looked happier.

Then the front door of the bank opened. Anna came in.

Her face was pale, her eyes strangely tense. Pitt saw her from behind the partition, arose, beckoned to her. She pushed open the little swinging door and entered.

"Anna," said Pitt, "I'm sure you know Mr. Kupp. He and I—"

"I don't need any introduction," snapped Anna.

Pitt looked at her queerly. "All right, but—"

"I'm just delivering a message, Mr. Pitt," she said in a strained voice.

"You sent my father to Galesburg. You gave him an address there that doesn't exist! There's no such place!" She ignored Pitt's look of surprise, rushed on: "You're just another crook, Mr. Pitt! You and this contemptible man, Kupp, are both crooks!" Her voice was breaking. "It's hateful! You sent my father to Galesburg just to get him out of the way! You wanted a free hand to carry out your own dirty scheme. You're a liar and a cheat! You—you—"

Her voice failed her. Suddenly, she swung quickly about and ran out of the bank.

Pitt looked at Kupp, and Kupp looked at Pitt. Then Pitt smiled faintly, shrugged one shoulder. Kupp was smiling his everlasting frozen smile.

"Mr. Kupp," said Pitt, "let us be seated."

IT was an hour before Pitt got back to the house. Dan had the baggage packed in the limousine. He was at the wheel.

"Say, boss," he said, uneasily, "what the hell's up? The women is kinda upset. I was trying to be so-ciable, but—"

"All my fault, Dan," Pitt said. "But I'll be back out in a few minutes."

He went in. Mrs. Lake was busy in the kitchen. Anna was absorbed at a sewing machine in the living room. She did not look up.

"Anna," said Pitt, "I'll be leaving soon."

"You never should have stayed," Anna said in a hard little voice. "But no doubt you made a very good deal for yourself."

"Excellent," said Pitt. "With your help. But I owe two twenty-dollar bills to young Eggas. I won't be see-

ing him." Pitt put the money down beside her. "Will you please give these to him for me?"

"I'd rather not touch them," said Anna.

"Eggas was a help, too," Pitt went on placidly. "You see, I found Mr. Kupp to be what I expected—foxy, greedy, and vengeful. That made things easier."

"Easier?"

"Of course. There's no one easier to out-fox than the human fox. There's no one easier to hoodwink than the legitimate crook. There's no one easier to take things away from than the man who wants everything for himself. And the desire for revenge, dear Anna, endows such a man with all the attributes of a perfect victim!"

"I'm glad you found it so easy," Anna said tartly.

Pitt continued blandly: "First, Mr. Kupp had to be impregnated with the notion that the claim his son stole from your father was probably worthless—that the really good claim was the one I had acquired an interest in. Eggas' help was invaluable in that respect. It was he who had told the Kupps about your father's work on the new claim. So I got him to pass the word on, last night, that he had been *told* to do that, thereby creating the impression that your father had deliberately misled the Kupps until such time as he had made arrangements for the old claim."

Anna's voice was sarcastic: "You are really quite clever!"

PITT ignored the thrust. "Last night I wired to a friend of mine.

The wire was in code, so of course the stationmaster didn't know what it meant. But the answering wire was in plain English — and contained just

what I wanted Mr. Kupp to think about me. He would believe, no doubt, that while I was in a position to negotiate the holdings I had acquired; I would have nothing to lose by making a new deal; since I was not the party putting up the money. Then, he would believe that I would be dissatisfied because of having my commission cut—"

"I've heard enough!" Anna sprang to her feet, faced him coldly. "To think that I could ever have trusted you!"

"You shouldn't trust strangers," Pitt retorted gently. "But, even if you hadn't trusted me, you helped me very much!"

"I—I helped—"

"Certainly. Everything depended upon Mr. Kupp believing that I was prepared to double-cross your father. You proved that for him—left him no room for doubt. There was no mistaking your sincerity. I had just got through telling him that I sent your father to Galesburg to get him out of the way." He smiled down at her a little sadly. "You were splendid. Thank you."

"So you—you cheated my father so that you could cheat Kupp!"

Pitt didn't seem to hear her. "Think of the opportunity for revenge I gave him!"

He was quite willing to give me the good new claim in exchange for my sixty per cent interest in the old one. Why? Well, in addition to the financial consideration, by holding the sixty per cent interest he could play with your father! It didn't take him long to see that!"

Anna choked. "I wouldn't know who to hate worse—you or Kupp—"

"I'll have to be going," Pitt cut in briskly. "By the way, I've written some information for your father." He

put an envelope on the table. "Please see that he gets it on his return."

Anna's eyes flashed fire. Pitt merely waved a hand, turned and strolled out of the front door.

In a moment he was sitting in the limousine. Dan waited for him to give the word.

"We oughter make one of the big burgs," Dan suggested hopefully, "by night. Gee, I sure would like—" He stopped abruptly, gaped. "Say, boss, tell me, where did all the dough come from?"

Pitt was stuffing a sheaf of bills in a handbag. "My friend Kupp," he said very quietly. "You wouldn't know about it, Dan. But, you see, he was under the impression that I was going to get a commission on a deal from a man named Ravvelock. Of course, in making another deal with Kupp, it was necessary that he make up the commission I was losing. Kind of him, eh?" Pitt sighed a little. "Well, let's be going—"

A frantic voice at the door of the house halted him. Anna was running down the walk. She stopped, breathless, at the car. In her hand was an envelope.

"You opened it!" Pitt accused her.

"Yes." Her voice was low and uncertain. "It—it—oh, you're giving the claim back to dad!" She started to cry a little. "I—I'm so sorry for what I said," she whispered.

"Perhaps you were right," Pitt said gently. "Well, good-by, and—"

"But I don't want you to go," cried Anna.

"I must," said Pitt.

"Then I'll go with you. I—I—"

"You," said Pitt, firmly, "will wait right here until a better man than I comes along and claims you."

He nodded to Dan. The chauffeur

started the limousine. As they swung the corner into the highway, Pitt glanced back. Anna was standing in the road, forlornly, gazing at the vanishing car.

"Dan," said Pitt, regretfully, "this going away is—well, rather painful."

"Yeah," said Dan, stepping the speed up to seventy. "The old lady sure was a hell of a swell cook."

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## The Thief of Teheran

AMONG the other treasures owned by the Shah of Persia was the most valuable armchair in the world. It was constructed of precious metals inlaid with priceless stones. Naturally, such a costly prize tempted many thieves, but the Shah had it so well protected that little opportunity was offered for its theft. Anyone seen carrying such a heavy and bulky article out of the palace would instantly be regarded with suspicion. It would have been very difficult to have broken it up into smaller pieces on account of its sturdy construction and the limited amount of time available for such an operation.

According to the judgment of the thief, the only practical plan was to gouge some of the jewels out and make away with them. Even the reward for that haul would be sufficient for the thief to live in comfort, if not luxury, for years to come.

To effect that end, the thief made overtures to the Keeper of the Palace. He did not say in his application that he desired to steal some jewels; he stated that he wished a job in the Palace of the Shah. So carefully did he word his application and so earnest did he appear that he was forthwith hired.

He gradually became regarded as a fixture about the Palace and no suspicion was aroused by his coming and going. He worked himself up to such a position that he had access to the world's most valuable chair. Then one night when no one was about, he succeeded in getting a handful of stones from it and could hardly wait to trade them for cash.

The theft was discovered at once and a great hue and cry went up to find the guilty person. The Shah ordered the Keeper of the Palace locked up, along with the servants, and promised that the Keeper's head would be chopped off if the thief was not produced in short order. The servants looked forward to a similar fate should they fail to become astute detectives on the spot.

The thief was caught in this dragnet of the Shah and the jewels were recovered. He did not live to enjoy any of the rewards of his thievery, for his head was cut off and paraded through the streets of Teheran on a pole by the Shah's Bodyguard as an advertisement of the assertion that crime does not pay—when the crime has to do with the Shah.

—John Berry.

# Death Rides *the Deep*



"This has gone far enough—" he began

By  
Fred MacIsaac

---

*Ralph Stephenson Corners  
the Desperate Criminals  
Who Bootleg and Hijack  
Gold—and on the Dark  
Foredeck of the Giant  
Liner, Five Inches of Cold  
Steel Plunge into His Body*

---

*What has happened—*

CAREY CONNORS hired Goat Garson to stab Bertram Butterfield, a millionaire from Montana, in order to recover some notes which were the rich man's security in a mysterious deal they had undertaken. Because his girl-friend, Dora Dorchester, learned of the murder, Connors strangled her and sent her body in a trunk aboard the great new British superliner *King George*, on which he was sailing for England. The trunk was lost—and the body of Dora was found on the bed in the cabin of a drunkard, Harlow:

Mr. Snark, the purser, kept the murder

This story began in *Detective Fiction Weekly* for May 30

of the Girl in Pajamas a secret, but wire-  
lessed the Department of Justice to send a  
G-man to assist the Scotland Yard detec-  
tive aboard the ship, Sergeant Brightman.  
So Ralph Stephenson joined the ship by  
plane. He disguised himself as an old man,  
but was recognized as a G-man by the  
blonde siren, Mrs. Amos Smith, and others.

Meanwhile Richard Rexford Third, a  
rich playboy, had fallen in love with Clara  
Calthor, a beautiful brunette from Mon-  
tana on her way abroad to study music.  
Joe Moreno, a New York racketeer, threat-  
ened Rexford, but the playboy knew Ralph  
Stephenson in college, and they worked  
together.

Sir Robert Rushton, vice-president of  
the line, was found strangled by a mur-  
derer aboard ship. Captain Grant was kid-  
naped from his own cabin, and imprisoned  
in the liner's garage to die. He released  
himself—but Ralph Stephenson noted that  
if the plan of the criminals had been suc-  
cessful, Grant's body would not have been  
discovered until the ship docked. A gun-  
man tried to shoot Rexford, and a note  
Rexford sent Stephenson vanished.

To the G-man it was evident that mem-  
bers of the crew were banded together in  
a plot in which murder was a mere inci-  
dent, but his only real clue was the fact  
that Carey Connors, Butterfield, Rusht-  
on, and Snark dined together the night be-  
fore sailing. Two of the four now have  
died. Stephenson did not know that it was  
Connors who had planted a sinister box  
of freight in Hold Number Two, labeled  
"motor axles," and that Hunter, the liner's  
first officer, had helped him! But he did  
tell Rexford that he suspected these "motor  
axles" were really solid gold, being boot-  
legged to England to avoid the embargo.

And this conversation was overheard by  
the conspirators in the next cabin—the one  
in which Dora's body was found. The  
criminals will win millions if they can si-  
lence Stephenson and Rexford at once!

## CHAPTER XXIX

### Miss Calthor Tells All

MISS CLARA CALTHER in  
her best evening dress was  
coming along the C deck from  
her cabin. Her black eyes were shin-

ing brightly, her mouth was smiling  
unconsciously. She had dined deli-  
ciously and in the charming company  
of Richard Rexford. She had had  
after dinner coffee in the lounge with  
the agreeable Mr. Carey Connors. She  
was now on her way to the gorgeous  
ballroom where she had reason to be-  
lieve that she would not be a wall-  
flower.

Mr. Stephenson, Dick had assured  
her, had secured him an invitation to  
the dance. Mr. Connors had asked for  
several dances, and no doubt the very  
nice Mr. Stephenson would be there  
and would want to take her out on the  
floor. A girl from a small town, a poor  
girl, one who had never been anywhere  
or seen anything, was now a first cabin  
passenger on the finest ship in the  
world, which was breaking the ocean  
record. She was the recipient of lots  
of attention. She began to hum a song  
under her breath. And just ahead of  
her a stateroom door opened and Mr.  
Connors stepped out into the passage.  
He saw her, he smiled at her gaily and  
waited for her in the open doorway.

"Well met," he exclaimed. "I was  
hoping to find you in the ballroom."

"I'm on my way," she declared.  
"Oh, what a lovely stateroom!" She  
was peering over his shoulder into the  
large *de luxe* cabin. "I thought mine  
was the last word, but it's a cubbyhole  
beside this."

"It's not one of the finest rooms on  
board, but rather nice," he assured her.  
"Come in and look it over."

She hesitated and woman's curiosity  
overcame her. After all, conventions  
were relaxed on shipboard. Mr. Rex-  
ford had said so. And this man was  
a gentleman and she did want to see  
the inside of one of the *de luxe* cabins.

She did not observe a man coming  
unsteadily along the passage, but de-

spite the distance, he observed and recognized her. As Clara entered the cabin, Connors stepped in behind her, gently closing the door. The girl stood in the center of the beautiful room enraptured. And Clarence Harlow stopped outside the door and gazed at the card inserted in the name rack which stated that it was the cabin of Mr. Carey Connors.

He laid his head on one side and closed one eye. "So that's the kind of a dame she is," he remarked to the ambient atmosphere.

"The bathroom is rather nice," Connors told the girl. "Right in there."

"It's gorgeous!" she exclaimed ecstatically. Connors picked up his telephone. "Please send me a bottle of champagne and two glasses," he requested. Clara turned and gave him a startled glance.

"Oh, I couldn't," she cried. "Not here."

"My dear child, a glass of wine and we'll go up to the ball. The music won't start for half an hour yet. Come, come, don't be a little country girl."

"We-ell, just one little sip," she said. "I haven't tasted champagne yet. I've always wanted to."

The steward entered with a bottle of wine in a cooler and with a tray with glasses. He opened the bottle expeditiously and filled two glasses.

Clara sipped hers eagerly. "Oh, it makes the bubbles come up my nose!" she exclaimed.

"Drink very slowly and you'll get full enjoyment. I'm looking forward very much to dancing with you."

"I do dance well," she admitted naively. "If I fail at grand opera, maybe I can earn a living in light opera, dancing as well as singing."

"Oh, you're sure to succeed at grand

opera," he asserted. "Your glass is empty. Another one."

"No, really," she protested, but he refilled her glass.

"Miss Calthor," he said, after a few minutes of light chatter, "you spoke of meeting Sir Robert Rushton. I am sorry to tell you that he died today. I believe I told you that he was ill."

She stared at him blankly. "You mean he's dead?" she cried.

"You said you didn't know him. Why be so distressed?"

"But it seems so terrible! Now I can't deliver the letter."

"Oh, you had a letter for him? You said you didn't."

"I said I didn't have a letter of introduction. This is one I was to give him. It was quite important."

"I was quite a friend of his. He stayed with me at my club in New York. Perhaps if you would let me read it I could tell you what should be done with it."

"I couldn't do that," she declared. She picked up her handbag and clasped it tightly, which was as good as informing him that the letter was within.

"But why not, since he's dead?"

"I was told I must deliver it personally, that the ship's mails couldn't be trusted, that I wasn't to send it to him on board."

"You're distressed," he said contritely. "And no doubt it's of no importance, now. I could tell you in a second."

"No, no. I'll have to hold it, maybe mail it back to Mr. Ormsby from England."

"Ormsby, the Butte, Montana, man?"

She nodded.

"Why, I know him very well," he said untruthfully. "Better let me have the letter."

She shook her head stubbornly.

"No, no," she exclaimed. "I couldn't. Really. And I must go."

"Very well," he said with a vexed smile. "We'll have one more glass of wine and then we'll go."

HE took her glass, went to the table upon which he had placed the bottle, turned his back to her as he filled the glass and then drew from his waistcoat pocket a folded paper and dropped its powdered contents into the glass. It wasn't the first time that he had had to take stern measures with a young woman, and he was always prepared. She drained her glass quickly, being eager to get out of a man's room. She laughed, a sort of silly laugh, and then her head dropped upon her beautiful bosom and she slept.

Connors picked up her bag, opened it and found a folded letter addressed in masculine hand to Sir Robert Rushton. He inserted a pencil in a corner of the envelope and opened the flap without tearing it. He hastily perused the letter:

DEAR SIR ROBERT RUSHTON:

I don't know you but you may have heard of me. I take the liberty of sending you this note because I've been unable to locate Bertram Butterfield. I came by plane from Butte to tip him that there has been a leak in my foundry and Federal snoopers have been around. Butterfield does not trust Connors and took his notes for a quarter of a million. I think you should have this information.

HENRY ORMSBY.

He crushed the letter in his hand because the door, which he had not dared to lock lest Clara become alarmed, was suddenly thrown open.

Richard Rexford Third stood in the doorway. He took in the picture instantly—the unconscious girl, the sleek would-be seducer.

"Why, damn you!" he bellowed and rushed upon Connors, both fists swinging. Connors countered the first blow and received the second in the stomach. With an oath he rushed at his assailant. He was a good boxer, but Rexford was a better one; he was younger, stronger, and in better condition. He ripped in, battered Connors' face, doubled him up with stomach blows, and Connors, a savage at heart, but one who couldn't stand punishment without losing his head, thrust his hand into his hip pocket. As his automatic pistol came out, the champagne bottle descended upon the top of his head, shattered, and knocked the man senseless. The gun dropped from his hand and he crumpled to the floor.

And Dick's eyes fell upon a crumpled letter and a woman's purse open on the table. He swooped upon the letter, thrust it in his pocket, and put the purse in another pocket.

"Clara, darling, wake up," he cried, shaking her violently. Clara did not wake up. "Drugged," he muttered. "I ought to have murdered him."

Picking the girl up in his arms, he rushed into the corridor, coming face to face with an astonished steward.

"Where is Miss Calther's stateroom?" he demanded.

"Has the lady fainted?" gasped the man.

"Yes, that's it."

"This way, sir."

A moment later Ralph laid her in her berth. "Phone for the stewardess and the doctor," he commanded. "I'll be down in a few minutes to find out how she is."

He stepped out into the passage and remembered the letter and the purse. He glanced at the letter. Not in her handwriting—and addressed to Sir Robert Rushton!

"Ralph must see this," he muttered. He knocked at the door of Clara's cabin and handed in the purse and set forth in search of Stephenson. Why, this bore out Ralph's theory! Rush-ton and Butterfield and Connors were in on some deal and feared Federal operatives. He passed the door of Connors' cabin without a glance. The bottle had cut gashes in the man's head, but he didn't care if the scoundrel bled to death. He had drugged and robbed the loveliest girl in the world.

If it hadn't been for Harlow, what dreadful thing might not have happened? He was sorry he had slugged Harlow when that drunken oaf had informed him he had seen Miss Calther going into Carey Connors' stateroom.

## CHAPTER XXX

### Knife in the Dark

RALPH STEPHENSON stood in the mortician's gazing down upon the countenance of the man he had killed. "This is the fellow who asked me for a match," he declared. "The other man talked like an Englishman. I never had a look at him."

"I've been through this one's possessions very thoroughly," stated Brightman. "There was a false bottom to his trunk. In it I found a pistol with a silencer on it, a radio contraption with head phones, and four yards of rope with a grappling hook on it."

"That explains the entering and exiting from Harlow's cabin," declared Ralph. "I think that waistcoat with the button off will just about fit this fellow. But he was down here in Tourist. And the rope and hook must have been used from the cabin over or under Harlow's."

"The lad over you is confined to his

cabin," said Brightman. "Walsingham is the name. An ex-convict. I sent him up myself. I encountered him this afternoon in a companionway, and, with the things that had been happening on board, decided to lock up a known criminal."

"Have you Spiegel's passport? The thug I shot in steerage?" Ralph asked. Brightman had secured it from the purser and handed it over.

"A naturalized American citizen, born in Rhodes. Sergeant, this Levantine may have been the murderer of Sir Robert. He could have dropped from the promenade deck to Rushton's cabin window by means of this rope and grappling iron."

"In broad daylight?" asked the sergeant incredulously.

"This is a new crew on a new ship. Nobody would question a seaman who was swinging over the side, perhaps wielding a paint brush."

"That's true."

"And, by means of the same rope and hook, either Spiegel or your friend Walsingham dropped from Walsingham's window to Harlow's porthole."

"And why should they wish to do that?"

"Because I occupied the next cabin and they were aware of my identity. I can show you where a hole was bored in my partition so that they could listen in by means of this radio contrivance. I'm sure the second man in the steerage cabin was English. He left promising to return very shortly but he didn't come back. Suppose it was Walsingham — that you encountered him after he had left steerage and placed him under arrest? That explains why he didn't return. Spiegel went to find out the reason for his absence, which gave me my opportunity to get free of my bonds."

"But, as yet, Mr. Stephenson, we haven't the slightest explanation of all this queer business," said the sergeant gloomily.

"It won't be long now," Ralph assured him. "Suppose you take me out of here and show me this Amos Smith. Spiegel is dead, Walsingham confined to his cabin. Better lock up Moreno in Tourist."

Brightman nodded. "I've heard of Levantines garroting people," he declared. "Spiegel might have killed Sir Robert—but what for?"

"We'll find out," Ralph said.

"There's Smith," said Sergeant Brightman. The pair were standing on deck gazing through a window into the brightly lighted smoking room. At a table directly opposite the window sat the mysterious Mr. Smith. Ralph had a good view of him. He was dealing a hand of bridge to persons unknown to Stephenson, while the beautiful Mrs. Smith sat in a chair beside her husband, earnestly kibitzing. She wore a saffron silk gown cut very low. Around her neck was a pearl necklace. On her arms and fingers blazed diamonds. She was a very attractive object. Ralph, however, was staring at Smith. The face was faintly familiar—a long, hard countenance boasting a prominent nose and a pair of gimlet-like eyes. There was a touch of gray in his hair. He had seen the fellow somewhere but he couldn't place him. And, suddenly, he remembered.

This was A. J. Smith, an exporter who had had an office on the same corridor in a building in downtown New York where Ralph had practiced law for several years. He had never spoken to the man but he had nodded to him on occasions in an elevator. Smith, apparently, had remembered him more clearly.

"I'll see about Moreno," said Sergeant Brightman, who departed. Ralph's eyes were fixed upon Smith's unattractive countenance and he didn't observe that the woman had looked up and paled suddenly. He did see her rise and leave the smoking room. Ralph was trying to place Smith in the same gallery with Walsingham, the Englishman; Connors, the clubman; Moreno, the Italian racketeer; Spiegel, the Levantine. Exporter! That covered a lot. Many bootleggers in the old days had called themselves exporters and importers.

A deck steward touched his arm. "Mr. Stephenson, a radiogram here for you."

Ralph accepted the envelope; signed for it, opened it, and by the light streaming through the smoking room, saw that it was in code. He placed it in his vest pocket to be decoded later and strolled forward thoughtfully. His mind had gone back to Dora Dorchester, the unfortunate play girl, whose body had been discovered in Harlow's cabin. It had undoubtedly entered through the porthole, having been lowered from above by Walsingham and Spiegel.

What were that pair doing with the dead body of Sir Robert Rushton's friend? For what reason should they have killed her and why had they brought her aboard?

If this outfit were on the ship to secure possession of the illicit gold that Ralph was morally certain Connors had sent aboard, they wouldn't have embarrassed themselves with the dead body of a woman.

He stopped and leaned on the rail. Rushton, a stranger to New York, had stopped at Connors' club. He and Connors were undoubtedly in this deal together. So was Butterfield. By

Jove! Connors had introduced Butterfield to the show girl, with whom he had gone off to be found dead in an alley. Suppose Connors, who knew most of the wild women of Broadway, had introduced Rushton to this Dorchester girl?

Brightman was sure the body had been brought aboard in a trunk. Connors had personally brought a trunk to the pier, marked it "Wanted" and made a fuss when it wasn't delivered to the stateroom.

**S**UPPOSE Connors had strangled this woman, for a reason to be conjectured, put her in the trunk and had intended to push the body through his porthole?

Suppose others had watched his arrival, observed his solicitude on the pier regarding the trunk, and had had it taken to Walsingham's cabin? He could imagine their consternation when they opened it.

They had to get rid of the body and they got it into Harlow's cabin. They had to get rid of the trunk and had it deposited in the baggage room when the attendants were at dinner. It was found there and delivered to Connors—whose state of mind when he found it empty, Ralph could imagine. When Ralph, himself, moved into the next stateroom Walsingham or his man Spiegel made new use of their rope and hook to reënter the always vacant cabin of Harlow to listen-in on the Federal operative, to whose identity they had unquestionably been tipped by Smith.

Clear so far. But there remained the kidnaping of Captain Grant and his return. Being in the murder business, why hadn't they murdered him? In what way had his escape interfered with their plans, whatever they were?

Well, fortunately, Walsingham was a known criminal who could be handled without gloves. Brightman and Ralph would call on him tonight and give the fellow the third degree.

"A penny for your thoughts," said a soft voice. Ralph gave a start and looked into the luminous eyes of Mrs. Cynthia Smith. She had put on a black fur cape which descended to her heels, over her evening gown, and wrapped a black scarf around her carefully marcelled gold curls.

Ralph grinned at her good-naturedly. So Delilah, once foiled, was impudent enough to try her hand a second time upon Samson?

"I was thinking about you, Mrs. Smith," he said mockingly. "How beautiful you are!"

She thrust a bare arm out beneath her cape and thrust her left hand inside his elbow.

"It was stuffy in the smoking room," she informed him. "My husband is playing bridge as usual. You never saw such a man. I'm sorry about this afternoon."

"So am I," he said dryly.

"Let's stroll along," she suggested. "This afternoon he dragged me from the dining room right into the smoking room. Needed a fourth at bridge. I couldn't get away but I kept thinking of you."

Ralph's broken ribs were making themselves felt but he thrust out his chin and, despite the pain of promenading, kept pace with the young woman.

"You're undependable," he told her with twitching lips. "I looked forward to our tête-à-tête in your cabin, and perhaps to a meeting with your husband."

"Where have you been all day and evening? I didn't see you in the dining saloon?"

"Had a lot of work to do and dined in my cabin."

She drew in a deep breath. "Isn't it gorgeous out here! Those silly people stick around inside and miss all this."

The promenade deck, in fact, was deserted. A steward who had been piling up deck chairs for the night passed them with an armful of cushions. They reached the forward rail. It was dark up here as the lights were out because the bridge was directly above. A sharp wind came over the bow of the racing leviathan. Ralph shivered. He had no overcoat and, since leaving his cabin, he had been traveling on his grit.

"I think I should go inside," he observed.

She huddled close to him. "Darling," she protested, "when it's so romantic out here?"

Her left arm came up and went around his shoulder. She drew him toward her. "You're such a handsome boy," she whispered. "Kiss me."

He tried to pull away. "This has gone far enough—" he began. And then: "Ah!"

For the right arm had come from beneath the cape and there was a knife in her hand. She stabbed with it viciously at his shirt front. Ralph twisted violently in her grasp and the knife, which had been pointed at his heart, was turned and plunged into his body, sinking into the flesh to a depth of five inches. With a groan he slid to the deck.

The forward bulkhead of the deck house and the deep shadows made a man lying on the deck invisible. She fumbled over him, found the hilt of the knife and drew it from the wound. She flitted to the side of the ship and dropped the weapon overboard. She

turned towards the spot where she knew Ralph was lying.

"You so-and-so," she exclaimed venomously. Then she pulled her cape closely about her, retreated aft to the first companion entrance and went inside.

FIVE minutes later, a man on watch stumbled over the body. He gave the alarm. Seamen carried Stephenson down the ladder to the deck below and hastened with him to the ship's hospital. The doctor made a hasty examination while the purser and Sergeant Brightman were summoned.

"They got him," muttered the sergeant, as he gazed down upon the still form on a cot in one of the hospital cabins. "Well, he was a well-plucked one."

"Will he live?" asked Mr. Snark anxiously.

"I think so," replied the doctor. "It's a serious wound but not necessarily fatal."

"How long will he be unconscious?" demanded the sergeant with some feeling.

"Hard to say. He's going to be a very sick man. You might as well go, now, gentlemen."

The purser and the Scotland Yard man went to the purser's office and sat down disconsolately.

"More and more of it," moaned Mr. Snark. "Here's Mr. Connors found beaten and bleeding. And Stephenson dying perhaps."

"Rexford admits hitting Connors with the bottle. Claims he drugged that Calther girl. The doctor said she was drugged, all right. Who could have stabbed Stephenson? Spiegel is dead, Walsingham is locked in his cabin and so is the Tourist passenger

Moreno. The liftman is in the brig. That leaves this Amos Smith."

"When I was summoned," replied Snark, "he was in the smoking room playing bridge. Mrs. Smith was with him. The knifing took place shortly before they found him, according to the doctor. A deck steward said he saw nobody on the forward part of the deck except a man in evening dress with a dark woman wearing black. He didn't notice them particularly."

"If he dies, we're as badly off as before," complained the sergeant. "We can't prove a connection between Spiegel and Walsingham, and, if we could, all we have on them is holding Stephenson in that steerage cabin."

"We'll be in port in two more days," said the purser gloomily. "And Stephenson won't be in a condition to help us. If he regains consciousness, of course, he may be able to tell us who stabbed him. Well," he sighed wearily, "I've got to report this to the captain. I don't know what to do about Rexford. I've confined him to his cabin, but Mr. Connors very gallantly refuses to press a complaint against him."

"I'm disappointed in Connors," declared the sergeant. "Drugging a young girl is dirty business. Though I've known some very prominent men who have indulged in that sort of thing. Usually it wasn't in the least necessary." He laughed cynically.

Dick Rexford lay awake in the cabin which he was supposed to share with Ralph Stephenson, waiting for his friend to put in an appearance. At one A.M., he picked up his phone to inquire but found that it had been cut off. He pounded on the door until the steward came.

"Can you find Mr. Stephenson?" he asked. "It's important."

"Sorry, sir," replied the steward.

"Mr. Stephenson has changed his cabin."

Muttering an oath, Dick went to bed.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### Rexford Carries On

AT eleven-thirty the next morning Dick was awakened by a knocking upon his door. "Come in," he called. To his surprise, the purser, not a steward, entered. Mr. Snark looked very grave.

"You're released from custody, Mr. Rexford," he said. "Mr. Connors makes no charge against you."

"Why, the swine!" exclaimed Dick. "I'm not through with him."

"You are released on your promise to keep the peace, Mr. Rexford," said the purser sternly. "May I ask how friendly you were with Mr. Stephenson?"

"We went to college together. By the way, why did he change his cabin?"

"Do you happen to know his occupation?"

"I do. And why he is on this ship. How is Miss Calther?"

"Quite well. No ill effects. I have confined Mr. Connors to his cabin, by the way. In view of the doctor's statement, I had to."

"I'm glad of it, the rat," Dick snapped.

"It was a shock to me that he would be capable of such a thing," said the purser. "Since you know Mr. Stephenson's business, I can tell you the truth. Mr. Stephenson is seriously wounded and in the hospital. A knife wound."

"Good God!"

"He's still unconscious, but it is expected that he will survive."

"So they got him!"

"You know about his experience in the steerage?" Snark asked.

"Certainly. I'm in his confidence. I know about everything."

"As far as we can discover, he was on the forward promenade deck with a dark woman just before he was stabbed. Do you happen to know of a dark woman with whom he was acquainted on board?"

"The woman in that stateroom with whom he had an engagement," said Dick promptly.

"Mrs. Smith is a very beautiful blonde. At the moment he was stabbed, she was sitting beside her husband in the smoking-room playing bridge. I was there at the time."

Mr. Snark believed he was speaking the truth. He had observed the lady when he entered the smoking-room and joined some acquaintances. He had seated himself with his back to her, had been in the room twenty minutes when he was summoned away by a steward to report the stabbing and, on his way out, had seen Mrs. Smith in her accustomed place. He would have sworn on a witness stand that she had been present all the time.

"The only other lady he knows is Miss Calther, and she was in her cabin with the doctor in attendance."

The purser rose. "Well, it's most perplexing. Mr. Stephenson may not be able to make a statement until after the ship has arrived in port. Good morning, Mr. Rexford."

Dick ordered coffee and rolls and breakfasted absent-mindedly. He was thinking of poor Ralph, injured, perhaps dying, in the discharge of his duty. In a couple of days, Ralph would have solved all these mysteries and landed the brute Connors in jail, perhaps got enough on him to have him executed. Now, the plot would succeed, the gold would be landed in England, the murderers would escape.

Something ought to be done. He got out of bed and re-read the note from Ormsby to Sir Robert Rushton.

He grinned. "I'll go to bat for old Ralph Stephenson," he said aloud. He tried his phone. It was working.

"Mr. Snark, please," he requested. Mr. Snark came immediately on the line.

"Rexford speaking. I told you I was in Stephenson's confidence. Well, I've the whole business worked out. I want to talk to the captain of this ship."

"Suppose you tell me, Mr. Rexford."

"I'll talk to the captain. Something important has to be done and he's the one who'll have to do it."

"If you're sure . . . He's very busy, he's rather irascible—"

"I tell him or nobody."

"I'll ask if he will see you."

Ralph dressed rapidly and in five minutes when the purser called back, he was ready to leave his cabin.

"Come to my office," requested Snark. "I'll conduct you to the captain."

Accompanied by Mr. Snark and Sergeant Brightman they took the lift to the top deck. As they stepped outside the sonorous bell of the ship boomed eight times. High noon of the second day.

CAPTAIN GRANT sat at his desk perusing, with a smile of contentment, the statement of the ship's position. Since noon yesterday the giant engines had driven the mighty vessel a distance of seven hundred ninety-one miles, an average of nearly thirty-four knots, the highest speed she had yet attained. And, even if the speed dropped a little, the record would be smashed to smithereens. For the

first time since his incarceration in the ship's garage, Captain Grant was smiling.

"Mr. Snark, sir," announced the captain's steward.

"Let him in. Come in, gentlemen," said the captain cordially.

"This is Mr. Rexford, sir, who requests an interview." Captain Grant eyed Dick sharply and was pleased at what he saw.

"I believe your father has traveled with me, Mr. Rexford," he said. "You resemble him."

"I've heard him speak of you, sir."

"Tell him when you see him that I wish he were aboard upon this voyage. I'm going to break the westbound record by three or four hours."

"Congratulations, sir."

"Sit down, gentlemen. I understand you're an intimate of this American detective who was stabbed last night. You think you can explain what has been happening during the last two days."

"I'm sure of it, sir."

The captain cleared his throat. "Proceed," he commanded.

"Well," said Ralph, nervously, "last night after he got out of the steerage cabin, I came into our room and we had a talk. Ralph says that there is a shipment of hoarded American gold on board."

"There is a small legal shipment in the strong-room, young man."

"This is in the hold, as freight, sir."

"Rot!" Captain Grant exploded.

"This gold was shipped as motor axles by Carey Connors, who is on board. It is the property of Bertram Butterfield, who was killed in New York the morning the ship sailed," said Dick stoutly. "It is billed to the Braxton Motor Works. Sir Robert Rush-ton was to handle the disposing of it in England."

"So you speak ill of the dead," said the captain harshly. "Young man—"

"I can prove my statement, I think, sir." Dick drew from his pocket the note he had found on the floor of Carey Connors' cabin and handed it to the skipper, who read it with growing amazement.

"Who's this Ormsby? Where did you get this note?"

"I don't know who he is. I found it on the floor of Carey Connors' cabin and I think he took it from Miss Calther's handbag after he had drugged the child—"

"What's this?" cried the captain. "Mr. Snark!"

"I'm afraid it's true. I've confined Mr. Connors to his cabin until I could communicate with you, sir."

"Hump. This letter seems to connect Sir Robert with this Butterfield. Doesn't trust Connors, eh? Evidently it was not a letter which was intended to be read by Connors."

"Of course not," said Dick. "Gold can't be shipped from America except through government channels. Butterfield was suspected of hoarding millions of gold which was no use to him unless he could sell it abroad."

"You think these motor axles are of solid gold, eh?" asked the captain sharply.

"I'll bet on it."

The captain scratched his nose. He rang for the steward.

"Send in the mate, Mr. Hunter," he commanded. When the man who had commanded the ship for a few hours entered, Grant said brusquely:

"Look over the manifests and see if you can locate a shipment of motor car axles, shipped by Mr. Carey Connors. Find out if they are easily accessible."

"Aye, sir."

Hunter disappeared. "Mr. Rex-

ford," said the captain, "if this stuff isn't buried deep in the hold we'll open up the case and have a look inside. I'd like a squint at gold axles myself. While not serviceable, undoubtedly they would be very valuable. Judging by this letter, Ormsby is the man who melted gold bars and dollars and moulded them into axles."

The mate returned in a few minutes. "That's shipment 1142," he stated. "Stored on the upper deck of the hold, right under Number Two hatch."

"Know anything about it?"

"Yes, sir. I knew Mr. Connors was shipping them and I loaded the case last so it would be first off the ship, at his request."

The captain made a clucking sound in his throat. "We can get at it through a bulkhead opening without lifting the hatch?"

"Easily, -sir. There's not much stored on that deck."

The captain stood up. "Come, gentlemen. We'll attend to this at once."

The ship's carpenters made short work of knocking off the cover of the huge case which contained the Connors shipment. The captain personally climbed upon a smaller case and looked inside.

"A couple of you men lift out one of these axles," he commanded. It was placed on the deck. The captain and the mate inspected it, lifted it, tapped it. The captain gazed angrily at Rexford.

"Steel," he said. "No question about it."

"Perhaps there are some steel axles among them, sir."

"We'll do a thorough job of this. Get busy, men."

At the end of an hour it was proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the

Connors shipment of steel motor car axles were steel motor truck axles and nothing more.

"Repair the damage to the casing," commanded Captain Grant. He turned and eyed Dick Rexford contemptuously. "Young man," he said, "in my opinion, you're a damn fool. If you received your information from Mr. Stephenson, he's another."

With this he strode toward the door in the bulkhead giving exit from the hold. Dick, the purser and the British detective were at his heels.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### Advice to the Lovelorn

THE captain went topside and the others proceeded to Mr. Snark's office. Dick sat down dispiritedly.

"Gold motor axles," scoffed Sergeant Brightman. "Why make axles out of gold? Why not mould it into something less complicated, like bricks or bars or rods?"

"I presume because axles were less likely to awaken suspicion, but it seems I made a mistake," said Dick. "Sorry, gentlemen."

He departed and Brightman left to quiz Walsingham in view of recent developments.

Mr. Snark sat thoughtfully at his desk. A diplomat and a man to whom the welfare of the company was of vital importance, he was considering how to square himself with that influential patron of the line, Mr. Carey Connors.

Stephenson came on board, apparently suspicious of Connors, and had shaped all evidence to support his opinion. He had constructed a theory of the tragedies on board based upon the presence in the hold of Connors' ship-

ment of solid gold axles. Well, the foundation had been kicked from under his theory. Mr. Connors and Sir Robert Rushton, if in a deal together at all, had been in a legitimate one.

That letter which Réxford had taken from Connors' stateroom—it did not display Connors in a good light. And Connors certainly had doped Miss Calther's liquor, presumably to obtain the letter from her—not for a viler purpose.

After a while Snark put on his cap, called on Mr. Connors, and apologized for the unfortunate circumstance that he had had to confine him to his cabin on Rexford's charges.

Carey Connors took things in good part. He bore no ill will to Rexford, who had misunderstood the situation he found when entering the stateroom. As for the girl, she wasn't drugged. The ship's doctor, if he said so, didn't know his business.

Snark was content to accept his statements. In fact, he grew confidential and told Connors how the wounded Federal operative had been persuaded that he was smuggling hoarded gold to Europe disguised as motor car axles.

"His friend Rexford told the skipper Stephenson's theory," said Snark, laughing heartily. "The captain agreed to open your case and investigate it."

He was looking into his drink as he spoke and didn't see Connors grow tense.

"You should have seen Rexford's face when it was demonstrated that you had shipped exactly what it said on the manifest, Mr. Connors, motor axles."

"Oh, yes, yes," said Connors vaguely. "Must you go, Mr. Snark?"

"I hope you consider that this—er—unpleasantness never happened," said the purser on his way out.

"I'll try to," muttered Connors. He sat down on one of his beds and buried his head in his hands.

Rexford found a note from Clara in his stateroom, thanking him very briefly for the service he had rendered. He immediately phoned her room but was told that she didn't feel well, would remain in her cabin all day, didn't know when she could see him.

To Rexford the third afternoon and evening were exceedingly dull, but to the captain and purser they were restful and sweet after the dreadful sequence of events of the two previous days.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith played bridge all afternoon with Clarence Harlow and a young woman he had managed to attract, being an agreeable young man when not under the influence of liquor. Today he was reasonably sober.

About five P.M. Dick went to his cabin and began gloomily to dress for dinner. He had gotten over his chagrin at the collapse of his and Ralph's cherished theory, but he was horribly worried about Clara. If Clara had been indiscreet in entering the beast's cabin, it was because she was young and unsophisticated. He had forgiven her for that. He was suffering because he wasn't able to see her. She had hung up on him before he could tell her that he didn't blame her a particle for her indiscretion.

At six his phone rang. It was the reception nurse in the ship's hospital.

"Mr. Rexford," she said, "Mr. Stephenson is conscious and much better. He wants you to open a small camera case in one of his bags and take out of the inside of it a small black book and come here with it."

"Can I see him and talk to him?"

"For a few minutes only."

Dick found the book after some difficulty and inquired the way to the hospital, where he was met by the ship's doctor.

"Oh, yes, he'll live," the surgeon said. "The knife missed all vital organs. The wound is painful but not serious. You can have a few minutes with him."

RALPH lay very white on his pillow but grinned dauntlessly at his friend. "Hard to kill," he said in a fairly strong voice. "Hand me that radiogram, please. Give me the code book."

For several minutes he was busy while color came into his cheeks.

"Got it," he said. "Dora Dorchester boasted to a girl-friend that Carey Connors had introduced her to an English nobleman whom she had dug for an ermine coat. No doubt Rushton revealed to her something about the gold shipment, and, finding it out, Connors strangled her and brought her on board in a trunk. Walsingham stole the trunk, found the body, put it in Harlow's cabin—"

"You're raving," said Dick incredulously. "There isn't any gold shipment. That case is full of steel axles."

"What's that?" cried Stephenson.

Dick told him about going to Connors' stateroom to disprove a statement of Harlow's that Clara was in there with him, told of finding the letter and what it contained.

"I knew if the ship reached port it would be too late," he said. "I went to the captain, told him your theory, showed him the letter, and he had the case broken open and the contents examined."

"Oh," said Ralph mournfully. "That breaks up the picture puzzle I thought I had almost solved. So Con-

nors drugged the girl. She ought to be grateful to you."

"She says she is. She wrote me a note, but when I phoned her she wouldn't come out and she hung up on me. I don't know what to do."

"Still in love with her?" asked the wounded man.

"Crazy about her, but she probably resents me on account of that, even though she says she's grateful to me."

Ralph smiled. "You're an ass," he said. "The kid is humiliated; afraid you despise her. Know what I'd do?"

"What?"

"Knock on her cabin door. When she opens it, take her in your arms, tell her you love her and want to marry her, kiss her and see what she says."

"Yes, but suppose she is angry. Suppose she puts me out?" Dick demurred.

"Bet you ten dollars to one she won't put you out. I'm tired, Dick. Get out of here."

The doctor entered. "That's right, Mr. Stephenson. Now you're going to sleep. Drink this."

Ralph made a grimace but tossed off the contents of the glass the doctor handed him.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### The Bootlegged Gold

NOON of the next day. Day's run seven hundred eighty-four miles. That the *King George* would break the record eastbound was a certainty.

The chief officer, accompanied by the purser, entered the captain's cabin. Both wore beaming smiles.

"We have to report, sir," said Mr. Hunter, "that we broke open a case of motor axles shipped by A. J. Smith of New York to Braxton's Motor Works, which also were consigned to the Num-

ber Two hold. Captain, they are solid gold covered with red paint, just as Mr. Stephenson said they would be. A few wooden ones in the bottom of the case to offset the extra weight of the gold."

"May I use your phone to tell Stephenson?" asked the purser eagerly. "He's a sharp one, he is."

"Go ahead," said the captain, still in more or less of a daze from the information just given him.

Snark was talking over the phone. "Very well. I'll make the request," he said.

"Captain Grant," he said, "Mr. Stephenson is very much stronger but, of course, unable to leave the hospital. He presents his respects and asks if you and Sergeant Brightman and myself will visit him down there. He says he is prepared to clear up a lot of things which have puzzled you, sir, including why you were—ahem—kidnaped. And he asks that you now place Mr. and Mrs. Amos Smith under arrest."

"Solid gold motor axles," murmured the captain. "Order the confinement of the Smiths to their cabin under guard. We'll call on Mr. Stephenson immediately."

Five minutes later the three Englishmen filed into the sickroom. Ralph, still pale but obviously much better, greeted them with a smile. A hospital attendant brought chairs.

"Captain," said Ralph. "Mr. Rexford was allowed to see me for a few minutes last night. He told me that, acting upon information supplied him by me, he persuaded you to open up the Connors shipment, claiming it contained illegal gold."

Captain Grant nodded.

"He acted without authority from me, of course, but that was my theory.

When I woke up this morning after a good night's sleep I realized why I had been mistaken. Sergeant Brightman, I came on board this ship at the request of the British government to aid you in investigating certain 'perturbing occurrences.' My government acceded to the request of your government because it regretted having missed the opportunity to place an operative on board. There was no reason why you should have been suspicious of Carey Connors, but we were very interested in his movements.

"Some time ago we had a tip from a foundry in Montana that what looked like gold bullion was being delivered there. As you know, the possession of coin or gold bullion not newly mined by private persons is illegal in the United States. The Treasury Department, for some time, has suspected Bertram Butterfield of being a gold hoarder. It had a suspicion that Butterfield was in some sort of deal with Carey Connors, for they were seen together in New York.

"We learned of the death of Butterfield under suspicious circumstances too late to question Connors, who had sailed on this ship. Had Connors found a way to get gold out of the country for Butterfield? Butterfield, if alive, dared make no protest if Connors failed to account to him for the sale of the gold abroad—unless Butterfield had something on Connors. If he had, Butterfield's death would put Connors in the clear.

"I discovered that there was a shipment of motor axles consigned to Braxton's in England and shipped by Connors. I received by radio telephone information that this shipment had come from a warehouse in Chicago and it had been shipped there to Butterfield from the Ormsby Iron Works in Butte.

It seemed queer that gold should have been turned into motor axles, but motor axles would have received slight scrutiny from the customs in New York and in England, so it seemed to me that Butterfield's hoarded gold was going abroad in that form.

"Now when these gold axles reached England, rather elaborate methods would be necessary to make it possible for the gold to be legitimized. I learned on this ship that Sir Robert Rushton was in financial difficulties, that he was intimate with Connors and I concluded that Rushton, who was a big stockholder in Braxton's, was to handle the English end of the deal. In that case there was no reason why Connors should have him murdered, though it looked as if he had had Butterfield murdered. I was just as much puzzled by the slaying of Sir Robert as you were, Sergeant.

"**T**HEN you disappeared, Captain Grant. Feeling strongly that the murder of Sir Robert and the discovery of a girl who'd been brought aboard dead were in some way connected with the presence on board of contraband gold, I could not conceive how Carey Connors' ends could be aided by what looked like the murder of the ship's captain. If Connors proposed to steal Butterfield's profits from his hoarded gold, I could understand Butterfield having been put out of the way. But he needed Sir Robert Rushton, so I doubted very much if he had murdered Sir Robert."

"At this time, my friend Dick Rexford, standing outside a porthole which looks out on the Tourist promenade deck, heard a conversation inside between Mr. and Mrs. Amos Smith. Smith had an office on the same corridor in New York where my law office

had been located. He had seen me come on board disguised; followed me—this is surmise, of course—but he did see me come out of my Tourist stateroom minus the disguise and recognized me.

"While he had not been aware that I was a Federal operative, he knew the ship wouldn't have permitted a second-rate lawyer to be put on board in mid-ocean. A Navy plane had put me on the ship, ergo, I was a Federal employee. Rexford heard him tell his wife they must do something about me. Dick sent me a note discreetly couched which was delivered in my cabin in my absence and removed by Smith or somebody in cahoots with him. Next morning an attempt was made to shoot Rexford through a port in the Tourist reading room. The bullet missed and he was able to tell me what he had overheard.

"I had already discovered that Harlow's stateroom, which was next to mine, was being entered through the porthole, which meant it must be entered from a stateroom directly above or below."

"Walsingham and Spiegel," said the sergeant. "They went through the connecting door between the two cabins and stole the letter from Rexford."

"No doubt. Well, if Smith knew me, I might know him. I scraped acquaintance with Mrs. Smith; or more properly, she scraped acquaintance with me. She arranged a meeting in her cabin. On my way I was knocked out and taken down in a lift to the closed steerage section. Incidentally, Captain, that is probably how you were spirited from the top deck. I find by the ship's plan that there is an entrance into the garage from the forward end of that steerage section. The liftman

was in the gang, as the sergeant has proved.

"The sergeant's recognition of Walsingham was providential. Otherwise he would have returned to where I was confined, and when it was dark he and Spiegel would have taken me to the top deck and thrown me overboard.

"By this time I was persuaded that the Smiths, Walsingham, and Spiegel were active because of the contraband gold on board. But I couldn't see how they expected to get possession of it. It might be that if Sir Robert Rushton were out of the way, somebody in his confidence in England would get the gold; somebody who knew how to dispose of it."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Captain Grant.

"I decided to see you in the morning and have the Connors shipment examined. After dinner, I dressed and went on deck. I had yet to get a look at Smith, and I intended to visit Walsingham with Sergeant Brightman. The sergeant pointed out Smith and went down to Tourist to attend to a known gangster named Joe Moreno. I looked the fellow over through a window from the promenade deck into the smoking room. I was certain, of course, that he was responsible for my incarceration in steerage. I was unable to place him at first and then I remembered him. Mrs. Smith must have observed me at the window, for a few minutes later she joined me on deck—"

"But Stephenson!" protested the purser. "I could swear she never left the smoking room."

"Take my word for it," said Ralph with a wry smile. "She and her husband evidently had not been in communication with Walsingham and she supposed I had been neatly disposed of. My escape meant peril to her and her

husband. She had gone to her state-room, put on a black cape, tied black tulle around her yellow hair, and secured a knife. I confess I hadn't expected violence from that source, I was off guard and she very nearly finished me."

"It's incredible," gasped the purser.

"Well, finding me a hospital case, fearing that the ship would dock and whatever the criminal plan might be, it would succeed, Dick Rexford went to you, sir, and told you what I had confided to him. You opened the case of motor axles and found them authentic. When I learned that, I was nonplussed. About that time the doctor put me to sleep.

"When I woke up this morning, the first thing which came into my mind was your kidnapping, sir. What earthly reason had they for attempting to eliminate you? And why risk taking you down to the garage when it would have been easy to lift you over the rail? And suddenly I saw the light.

"I phoned the purser to learn if A. J. Smith had a freight shipment on board. If he hadn't, I was licked. But it appeared that he had a case of motor axles consigned to Braxton's. Then I understood about the kidnapping."

"Well, I don't," said the captain.

"YOU will find that Second Officer Watson is in the conspiracy.

With you out of the way, sir, he became the mate, and was in charge of freight shipments. He only needed time enough to switch the labels on the two shipments. No doubt they would have left you in the garage until the ship reached port, when you'd have been found; but your return after the shipments had been relabeled didn't bother them."

"You mean Watson is a criminal," shouted the captain. "It's impossible!"

"You'll find he went into the hold with a couple of seamen who were in the pay of the crooks. Probably he was getting a large sum of money for doing the job. We know the switch was made."

"I'll sweat the swab," growled the captain. "I'll get it out of him."

"The fact that both shipments were consigned to Braxton's indicates that the head of the conspiracy will be found there," said Ralph. He sighed. He was very white. He had talked too much.

"Well," said the Scotland Yard man, "we have found the gold. We have Mrs. Smith on attempted murder. We can jail Walsingham on the confession I got out of the liftman that Walsingham and Spiegel planned your capture, that he had already taken Walsingham to the steerage deck and he helped Spiegel drag you from the lift into that cabin. Walsingham is a shrewd one. How are we going to make him tell who's chief of the mob?"

"Walsingham supposes that the gold will go right through to his chief at Braxton's. He won't mind a few years in jail for a cut-in on two million dollars," said Ralph. "But accuse him of the murder of Dora Dorchester. We know he and Spiegel placed the body in Harlow's bed. To save himself from conviction for a capital crime, he'll admit that he had Connors' trunk brought to his stateroom, opened it, found a body, and had to get rid of it."

"That admission will compel him to explain why he diverted the trunk Mr. Connors brought to the pier. To free himself from the murder charge he'll drag in his fellow conspirators."

"You mean that Connors murdered the Girl in Pajamas and brought her on board in a trunk?" asked the horrified captain.

"If Walsingham confesses how the trunk came into his possession, we can send Connors to the electric chair for the crime."

"It's incredible," murmured the purser.

"Connors introduced the Dorchester woman to Rushton. Rushton may have revealed enough of the deal with Connors to her so that she was in a position to menace Connors. Whatever the motive, there's no question he strangled the girl and brought her body on board."

"He seemed such a gentleman," murmured the sergeant.

"Now we have Mrs. Smith," continued Ralph. "We can send her up for a long term for sticking a knife into me. She'll turn State's evidence gladly and she wouldn't have gone in for direct action if she didn't know all the details of the plot."

The sergeant nodded, a hard light in his eyes.

"Gentlemen," said Ralph, "I'm very tired. I think we can depend on Scotland Yard to manage this job."

"Mr. Stephenson," said the sergeant, "you're a bit of all right, you are. Of course you had a big advantage of me, being suspicious of Connors when you came on board. I'll finish up this job to your satisfaction."

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### Connors Is Trapped

AT sundown on May 7th, the *King George* entered the harbor of Southampton. She had crossed the ocean in three days twenty-one hours elapsed time from Ambrose

Lightship to Cherbourg, her first stop. She moved in stately, complacent fashion through a harbor filled with vociferous shipping. Sirens blew, horns tooted, cannons roared. The sovereign ship of the seas had come back to Old England. Captain Grant had reached the apex of his honorable career.

He stood on the bridge, receiving the congratulations of the pilot. He smiled blandly at the pilot when that functionary asked him if it had been a pleasant voyage.

"Oh, the usual," he said. "Quite uneventful, save for the excitement to be expected in a race against time."

"Didn't see Mr. Watson as I came aboard, sir."

"Oh, yes. Mr. Watson is indisposed. Confined to his cabin."

There were others besides Mr. Watson confined to their cabins under guard. The charming Mrs. Smith and her husband. Mr. Walsingham. Mr. Carey Connors. And Mr. Joseph Moreno.

The police of two continents were interested in these people and Scotland Yard already had a gentleman named Harold Grey, general manager of the Braxton Works, in a cell, charged with instigating the murder of Sir Robert Rushton.

The weak link in the chain of conspiracy, as might have been expected, had been Mrs. Smith. Brought face to face with Ralph Stephenson and charged with attempted assassination, she had accepted the offer to turn State's evidence in the murder of Sir Robert and the gold conspiracy, and had told all she knew.

Second Officer Watson had made a full confession of his contribution. Captain Grant had identified Spiegel as the man who had squirted gas in his face from a contraption like a cigarette

holder, which was found in Walsingham's possession. The liftman, two cabin stewards, and two seamen talked under duress. Confronted with the mass of evidence, Walsingham and A. J. Smith had broken down.

Harold Grey, general manager of the Braxton Works, had conceived the plot to get possession of the gold axles. Walsingham had been his go-between and had enlisted A. J. Smith. Smith had bribed Second Officer Watson. Spiegel had made use of his rope and hook to enter Sir Robert's cabin in broad daylight.

And the evidence of the stewards, who had carried the trunk to Walsingham's cabin and watched their chance to return it to the baggage room from which it was conveyed to Carey Connors' stateroom, proved conclusively that it was Connors who had brought the body on board.

The chain of evidence against Connors was damning. The death of Butterfield, the deaths of Dora Dorchester and the Filipino house boy, were placed at his door.

In New York the police had been busy and had secured evidence that he had been on terms of intimacy with Dora Dorchester. On that murder charge he was almost sure to get the chair.

Moreno, the gangster, curiously enough, seemed to be in the clear. Spiegel had asserted that he was in Moreno's company at the moment when the shot was fired at Rexford, and Moreno, aware of his bad reputation, had accepted the alibi presented by a man he knew slightly. Spiegel, in fact, was establishing an alibi for himself.

Down in the ship's hospital, Ralph Stephenson, being a healthy man, was convalescing with great rapidity.

The steamship company had suggested that he remain on board during the great liner's stay in port, and when it was ready to sail, he would be in condition to go ashore. He had accepted. Washington had granted him a month's vacation and the thanks of the Treasury Department for his discovery of two millions in gold, which the government could confiscate.

And a month's vacation, in England, with full pay, listened very sweetly to Ralph Stephenson.

"Miss Calthor and Mr. Rexford to see you," said the nurse.

Clara and Dick came in hand in hand, their eyes shining with happiness.

"So you did what I told you and it worked," said Ralph gleefully.

"I did what you told me and it didn't work," replied Dick Rexford. "I knocked at her door and it was locked. She asked who it was. I told her. She said she didn't want to see me and I had to go away."

"Oh," exclaimed Ralph.

"I caught her when she came on deck last night," Dick continued, wearing a broad grin. "She started to run away from me but I grabbed her."

"I love you and I'm going to marry you," I told her. 'How about it?'

"If you really mean it, after what happened, I—I don't mind," she told me, and that's how it happened."

Ralph laughed. "Well, it's really

the way I suggested that you do it," he said complacently.

"You're a dear and I'm so sorry you're sick," Clara said to him with earnest solicitude.

"We have to have you as best man," Dick declared. "And as you can't go ashore with us, the captain has promised to come down here and marry us as soon as the ship has docked."

Ralph chuckled. "How about grand opera?" he asked the girl.

She laughed gaily. "I don't believe I'd have cared for opera."

"Anyway," declared Dick fondly, "grand opera is on the wane."

He kissed his fiancée and then grinned.

"I met Clarence Harlow a few minutes ago," he said. "He was about to go ashore and he was well oiled. He said to me, 'I've seen every woman on board. I've watched the last one go down the gangplank. Know what I think, Dick? I was plastered the first day. I was seeing things. I bet there never was any dame in my bed. It was an optical delusion, that's what it was.'"

"How about the garments you forced on Miss Calthor?" I demanded. "How do you account for them?"

"He blinked. 'Guess they must've been optical delusions. I kind of think I drink too much.'"

"Well, he's right about that," declared Ralph.

THE END

## Cipher Solvers' Club for April

*Continued from Page 86*

*Fifteen*—G. N. G., Key West, Fla.; Donald Houghtalin, Ann Arbor, Mich.; Mrs. Josephine Johnson, Pittsburg, Kans.; G. E. Long, Cripple Creek, Colo.; Jerry Phelan, Bronx, N. Y.; Posius, Brookline, Mass.; Johnny West, Iowa City, Iowa; \*Ike N. Wynne, Great Falls, Mont.

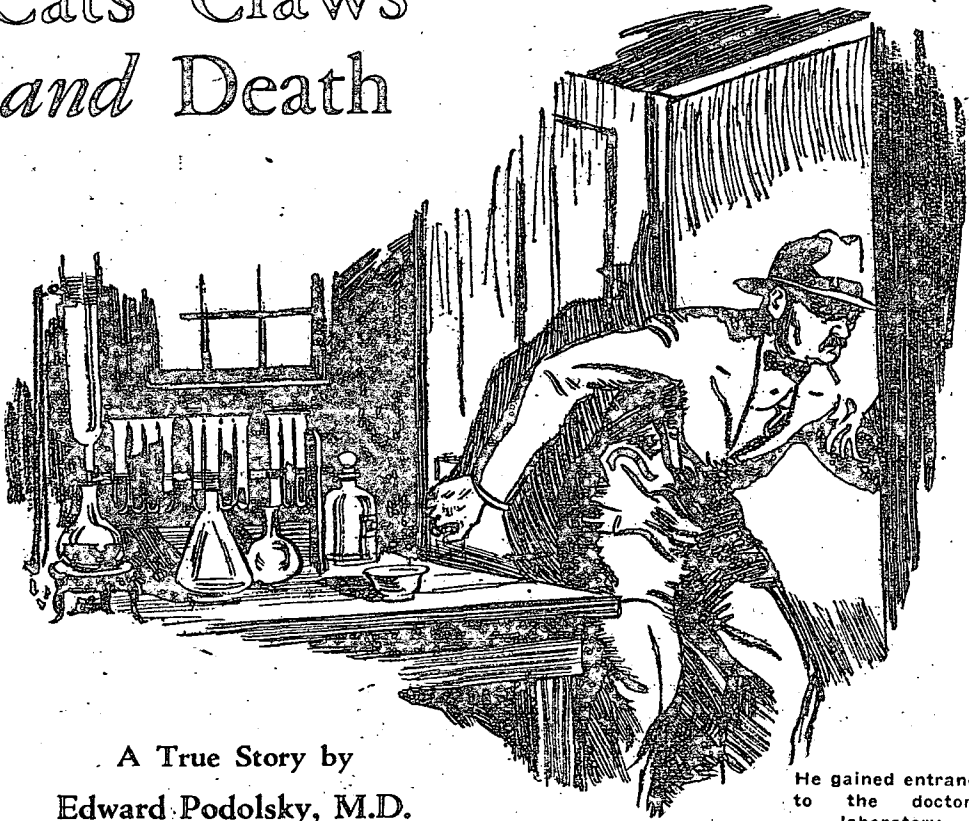
*Fourteen*—Edna D. Brooks, Attleboro, Mass.; La Vern E. Davis, San Francisco, Calif.; H. L.

Evans, New York, N. Y.; Simple Simon, Brooklyn, N. Y.

*Thirteen*—Myrtle Lee Bunn, Washington, D. C.; Al. Liston, Newark, N. J.; Carl H. W. Oestreich, Grants Pass, Oreg.; Charles Smith & Vincent, Petronella, Jersey City, N. J.; Wash, Portland, Me.

*Continued on Page 136*

# Cats' Claws and Death



A True Story by  
Edward Podolsky, M.D.

He gained entrance  
to the doctor's  
laboratory

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*Sleek Persian Cats Were  
the Murder-Weapon of a  
Strange Doctor who Dab-  
bled in Occult Sciences*

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IT'S a very difficult thing to put one over on an insurance company. They are naturally suspicious of all deaths, and before they can be induced to pay insurance money out, they must be satisfied that the death occurred naturally. Several years ago Sven Larsen died rather mysteriously from tetanus or lockjaw. When the doctor examined him he found several cats' claw marks on his hands. The

beneficiary of his death was his wife.

With the Larsens lived the brother of the late Sven, Jarg Larsen, a physician who was no longer in practice, and a man of rather eccentric behavior. He was interested in all sorts of weird sciences, like necromancy, ceroscopy, cledonism, hippomancy, metaphysics. He had a whole collection of retorts, crucibles and caldrons, as well as microscopes, and monkeys in cages. He was particularly fond of cats, and he had a dozen Persian and Siamese cats of which he was very fond.

He was continuously in debt, and consequently was always approaching his sister-in-law for money. At first she obliged him with small loans, but

as this habit of his soon became chronic, she rebelled. It was not long after when she, too, died. Her jaw set in the characteristic fashion of one afflicted with tetanus. Upon both her hands were cat's claw marks. Upon her death, her brother-in-law would become the beneficiary.

But, as has been said before, the insurance company became suspicious and a detective was sent down to investigate. When Dr. Larsen was asked why both his relatives had died from tetanus at such short intervals, he replied that the soil of the garden was full of the bacilli tetanus, and they, through carelessness, had infected themselves while working in the garden. A bacteriologist was asked to check up on the soil. He reported that the soil literally teemed with the tetanus germ.

But the detective was not easily satisfied. He gained entrance to the doctor's laboratory when the latter was away. With the proper precaution he poked among the various test tubes. What particularly interested him was a series of test tubes with a slanted yellow material in them, the surface of which was mottled with spots. They were plugged with absorbent cotton at the mouth. He took these away with him. While passing through the living room, he was much struck by the beauty of the strange doctor's cats. He approached and began to pat them.

While so occupied, he noticed a peculiar odor about them. It was faintly familiar. It came strongest from the cats' paws. Cautiously he smelled them. He recognized the odor now. It was carbolic acid. The doctor had a strange

habit of washing his cats' paws in carbolic acid.

The detective brought the tubes into the Medical Examiner's office. Under the microscope the growths in them were identified as tetanus germs. The detective related to the Medical Examiner the strange story of the cats and their paws that smelled of carbolic acid. The Medical Examiner added the various facts together: Mr. and Mrs. Larsen died from tetanus; they had cats' claw marks on their hands; Dr. Larsen had cultures of tetanus bacillus in his laboratory; he had cats, and their claws smelled of carbolic acid; Dr. Larsen was the only one who was absolutely certain to benefit by the deaths of his brother and sister-in-law.

Dr. Larsen was arrested. He was confronted with the facts. He confessed what the detectives already knew. He infected his cats' paws with the germs of tetanus and when he saw his brother, who was very fond of the cats, fondle one, he feigned anger and tore the cat away from him. The cat, in the struggle, scratched Mr. Larsen, infecting him with the tetanus germ. The same strategy was repeated with Mrs. Larsen.

Dr. Larsen was never brought to trial. He died mysteriously in his cell. When his body was examined, his jaw was set in the typical sardonic grin of tetanus death. Upon his left arm was found a cat's claw mark. A few feet away lay a Chinese back scratcher. Upon examination of its ivory claws, myriads of tetanus germs were found. He had committed suicide in a novel way.



# Civil Service Q & A

By "G-2"

## Could You Qualify as—

|                          |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Special Agent (G-Man)    | Police Patrolman    |
| Secret Service Operative | Police Detective    |
| Post Office Inspector    | Policewoman         |
| Customs Patrol           | Fingerprint Expert  |
| Immigration Patrol       | State Trooper       |
| Anti-Narcotic Agent      | Crime Prevention    |
| Parole Investigator      | Investigator        |
| Prison Keeper            | Probation Officer   |
| Internal Revenue Agent   | Criminologist       |
| Alcohol Tax Agent        | Police Radio Expert |

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*This department will give you every week typical questions asked in civil service examinations.*

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### More Math

LETTERS clamoring for more and trickier tests in mathematics continue to pour in. As to trickier problems, it is not the policy of civil service examiners to include them in tests since they are considered unfair and not a practical test of a civil service candidate's ability to reason out arithmetic problems encountered in every-day work.

Readers also request sample math tests for a wide variety of examinations and space is not available to meet their requests. However, nearly all civil service mental tests include mathematics problems graded to suit the requirement of each job. Thus, only simple problems are given in tests for the job of laborer, guard and other positions not requiring skill in working out mathematical problems; but the problems become more complicated in examinations where higher educational standards are fixed until a knowledge of higher mathematics is required to pass tests for jobs as engineer, accountant, bank examiner and other positions where mathematics

are deemed a fundamental requirement. For most civil service jobs, tests are usually confined to math problems of three grades; first, second and third—the complexity of the problems increasing to accord with the educational requirements fixed for each type of job.

From an assortment of several hundred civil service tests have been taken the math problems offered this week. They will be found below, arranged in their respective grades. The simplest problems, such as are given in laborer and clerical tests, are included in the first grade, and so on according to the type of test to be met. Ten problems in each grade are submitted and key answers are provided. No time limit is fixed; the big idea is to use this graded assortment of problems to determine the extent of your qualifications in the matter of civil service math.

**FIRST GRADE—Q 1**—If you buy a notebook for 55 cents, and 2 pencils at 7 cents each, how much change should you receive out of a \$2 bill? Ans.....

**Q 2**—Twenty-seven clerks write a total of 3,618 receipts. What is the average number of receipts per clerk? Ans.....

**Q 3**—Reduce to a whole or mixed number  $58\frac{2}{3}$  and show your work.

**Q 4**—Subtract  $24\frac{1}{6}$  from  $52\frac{3}{8}$  and show work.

**Q 5**—Change  $\frac{5}{16}$ ths into the equivalent decimal.

**Q 6**—John Kay built a house costing

\$6,500, sold it at a profit of 20% of the cost. State his selling price and show work.

Q 7—Mentally calculate 6 minutes plus 6 seconds, giving answer in seconds.

Q 8—Indicate the increase or decrease in the following record of arrests:

|                | 1931 | 1932 |       |
|----------------|------|------|-------|
| Gambling ..... | 4301 | 3002 | ..... |
| Burglary ..... | 1156 | 1184 | ..... |
| Robbery .....  | 945  | 1110 | ..... |

Q 9—Add .164, 21.175, .15, 456.7516, 6.12, 6759.10, .52, 731.

Q 10—Multiply one million by 101 millionths.

SECOND GRADE: Q 11—Regan & Co., brokers, sold a farm for \$12,500 and received a commission of  $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ . What amount, in cash, did the brokers receive and show work?

Q 12—How long will it take \$840 to earn \$78.12 at 6% interest?

Q 13—Willie's age would be equal to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of his grandmother's age if Willie were  $\frac{1}{5}$ th older than he is. Their combined ages are 87 years. What is the age of each?

Q 14—A hog raiser received \$72.25 for his young pigs on the basis of as many cents per pig as there were pigs in the consignment he sold. How many young pigs did he sell?

Q 15—A shoe dealer's cash register shows total day's receipts amounting to \$68. He finds that his clerks sold an equal number of \$10, \$5 and \$2 shoes. State the total number of pairs of shoes sold. Ans. ....

Q 16—Homer Card and Frank Anderson agreed to become partners and invested, respectively, \$2000 and \$1500 in the partnership, agreeing to share the profits in proportion to their investments. The first month the profit was \$500. State the profit of each and show work. Ans. ....

Q 17—A summer vacation bungalow is rented by three city clerks at a total rental of \$600 for the summer season, and they agree to pay for it on the basis of the time each occupies it. Clerk A occupies it for 6 weeks, and Clerks B and C each occupy it for three weeks. How much should each pay. Show work. Ans. ....

Q 18—A rural mail carrier is required to handle a daily average of 90 letters on

his route and makes three trips each day. All rural carriers, working out of the same postoffice, handle 105,300 letters in six days, making three trips a day. How many rural carriers are employed to maintain the required daily average? Ans. ....

Q 19—An insurance agent earned \$125 in commissions and spent \$75 of that amount for office rent. What part of his earnings went for office rent? Show work. Ans. ....

Q 20—An oil reservoir receives and discharges its contents through two different pipe lines, oil flowing in through one pipe at the rate of 3 gallons every four minutes, and the other pipe carries out 4 gallons every five minutes. It takes 285 minutes to empty the tank. What is the tank's total capacity? Ans. ....

THIRD GRADE—Q 21—An innkeeper decides to plaster the walls and ceiling of a dining room 16 ft. long, 12 ft. wide and 9 ft. high at 38 cents a square yard. The room contains 4 windows each 3 ft. by 6 ft., and 2 doors each  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft. by 7 ft. What will be the total cost of the plastering? Show work. Ans. ....

Q 22—A room 18 ft. long, 14 ft. wide, is to be carpeted with standard  $\frac{3}{4}$  yard wide Brussels carpet which costs \$3.50 per yard. What will be the total cost? Show work. Ans. ....

Q 23—Asked what salary he earns per year a glib salesman replied: "Just increase my present salary  $\frac{1}{5}$  and \$110 more and I would then be drawing down \$1010." State his present monthly salary. Ans. ....

Q 24—An investor held some  $4\frac{1}{2}\%$  public utility stock, par value \$7,200, and sold it at  $103\frac{1}{4}$ , and invested the proceeds in government 6% bonds at  $112\frac{1}{2}$ . What change occurred in his annual income? Ans. ....

Q 25—Add to a certain number  $\frac{1}{4}$  of itself and  $\frac{1}{5}$  of itself and the sum will be 87. Give the number. Ans. ....

Q 26—Itemize and close, and bring to a proper balance, the following statement of account as it should appear on the books of John Hammond: January 1, 1931, Hammond owed Henry Phillips \$965 on account. January 4, Hammond sold Phillips 65 barrels sugar, average weight 310 lbs., at \$4.60 per cwt. January 10, Hammond sold for Phillips 35 bags coffee, average 70

lbs. each, at 22 cents per lb., charge  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  commission. January 12, Phillips sold for Hammond 245 barrels flour at \$6.25 per barrel, charging 1% commission and \$9.50 for storage. January 20, Phillips sold Hammond 30 hogsheads syrup at 40 cents per gallon. January 23, Hammond tendered Phillips his note for \$480, due in 90 days, receiving credit for the proceeds discounted at the legal rate. January 29, Phillips sold Hammond 30 bags rice, average weight 110 lbs., at 35 cents per lb. In your answer state only the proper balance. Ans. ....

Q 27—Tariff laws impose the following duties: "Perfumery, including cologne and other toilet waters, articles of perfumery, whether in sachets or otherwise, and all preparations used as applications to the hair, mouth, teeth or skin, such as cosmetics, dentifrices, tooth soaps, pastes, theatrical grease paints, pomades, powders, and other toilet preparations, all the foregoing, if containing alcohol, 40 cents per pound and 75% ad valorem; if not containing alcohol, 75% ad valorem; bath salts, if not perfumed, 25% ad valorem; if perfumed (whether or not having medicinal properties) 75% ad valorem." As a customs inspector, calculate the duty to be imposed on each item below, and the total duty for all items:

(a) Powder, face, non-alcoholic, 1 gross, 4-ounce boxes, value 20 cents per box. Duty .....

(b) Tonic, hair, 20% alcohol, 12-ounce bottles, 100 gross, value \$20 per gross. Duty .....

(c) Pomade, hair, non-alcoholic, 1 gross 2-lb. jars, value 20 cents per jar. Duty .....

(d) Rouge, non-alcoholic, 5 gross, value \$.10 per jar. Duty .....

(e) Cleanser, skin, 2% alcohol, 1-lb. jars, 1 gross, total value \$20. Duty .....

(f) Total duty imposed .....

Q 28—The state highway commission awards a contract for road construction to a contractor who agrees to finish the job in 30 days, 8 hours to a day's work, and he puts 17 men to work at once. Five men strike on the 13th day and only  $\frac{1}{5}$  of the work has been done. The contractor jumps the day's work to 9 hours a day and hires extra men to complete the job. How many extra men must he hire to fulfill his contract? Ans. ....

Q 29—An army division contains 15,000 infantry, 3,000 artillery, 1,000 cavalry. The general staff orders each branch expanded proportionately until the division's total strength is brought up to 20,000 men. How many men will be added to the artillery? Ans. ....

Q 30—A housewife desires to paper a room 14 feet wide, 9 feet high, 18 feet long, with an allowance for 2 doors, 7 feet wide, and 3 windows  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide. The paper will cost \$2.25 per double roll. What will be the total cost and show work? Ans. ....

**KEY ANSWERS.** *First grade:* Q 1—\$1.31; Q 2—134; Q 3—58 divided by 3=19 with 1 remainder or  $19\frac{1}{3}$ ; Q 4— $52\frac{3}{8}$  and  $24\frac{1}{6}$  reduced to 24ths= $52\frac{9}{24}$  and  $24\frac{4}{24}$ , thus  $52\frac{9}{24}$  minus  $24\frac{4}{24}$  leaves  $28\frac{5}{24}$ ; Q 5—.3125; Q 6—\$7800; 6500 times 20%=\$1300 gain; 1300 plus \$6500=selling price of \$7800; Q 7—366 seconds; Q 8—Gambling, 1299 decrease, burglary, 28 increase, robbery, 165 increase; Q 9—7974.9806; Q 10—101.000101.

*Second grade:* Q 11—\$12,500 times  $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ =\$437.50 commission; Q 12—1 year, 6 months, 18 days; Q 13—15 years, 72 years; Q 14—85; Q 15—12 pairs; Q 16—2000 plus 1500=\$3500 total investment;  $2000/3500=4/7$  (Card's share).  $1500/3500=3/7$  (Anderson's share)  $4/7$  of \$500=\$285.71,  $3/7$  of \$500=\$214.29; Q 17—6 plus 3 plus 3=12 weeks; 12 divided into \$600=\$50 per week. Clerk A must pay \$50 times 6 weeks or \$300; B and C must each pay \$50 times 3 weeks or \$150 each; Q 18—65 carriers; Q 19— $75/125$ ths= $15/25=3/5$ ths; Q 20— $14\frac{1}{4}$  gallons.

*Third grade:* Q 21—12 plus 16 plus 12 plus 16=56 times 9 ft.=504 square feet; area of ceiling,  $12 \times 16$  ft.=192 sq. ft., total area 696 sq. ft. less 121 sq. ft. for openings=575 sq. ft. net area; 575 sq. ft. =63  $8/9$ ths sq. yards times \$.38=\$24.28; Q 22—\$147; 14 ft. divided by  $2\frac{1}{4}$  ft.=6  $2/9$ ths strips (7 strips must be purchased) thus 2 times 18 ft.=126 running feet or 42 yards times \$3.50 per yard=\$147; Q 23—\$62.50; Q 24—\$72.48; Q 25—60; Q 26—\$504.96 credit; Q 27—(a) \$21.60; (b) \$4,320; (c) \$136.80; (d) \$54; (e) \$72.60; (f) \$4,605; Q 28—34  $2/9$  or 35 men; Q 29—300 men; Q 30—18 ft. plus 14 ft.  $\times$  2=64 ft. room peri-

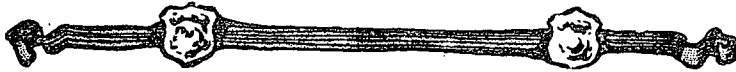
meter;  $2 \times 7 \text{ ft.} = 14$  plus  $3 \times 3\frac{1}{2} \text{ ft.} = 24\frac{1}{2}$  ft. total width of openings; 64 ft. minus  $24\frac{1}{2} \text{ ft.} = 39\frac{1}{2} \text{ ft.}$  net perimeter;  $39\frac{1}{2} \text{ ft.}$  divided by  $1\frac{1}{2} \text{ ft.}$  (width of roll)  $= 26\frac{1}{3}$  or 27 strips; 48 ft. (length of roll) divided by 9 ft. (height of room)  $= 5\frac{1}{3}$  (5 whole strips in a double roll) 27 strips divided by 5 strips  $= 5\frac{2}{5}$ th or 6 rolls; \$2.25 times 6  $= \$13.50$ .

By allowing 10 points for each correct answer in each grade you may arrive at a rating for yourself. If, for instance, you attain a mark of 70 or more in grade one, only 60 in grade two, and 50 in grade three, you had better stick to civil service

tests in which the math problems are confined to those of the first-grade type. If you succeed in attaining better than 70 in each of the three grades, consider yourself fairly certain of passing civil service math tests which do not require a working knowledge of higher mathematics.

*The questions and answers given above are copied from the official question and answer sheets. "G-2" assumes no responsibility for their accuracy, but if any answer seems debatable or incorrect, please communicate with "G-2," care of DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY, 280 Broadway, New York, N. Y.—THE EDITOR.*

### Next Week—Testing Your Personality



## Cipher Solvers' Club for April

*Continued from Page 131*

*Twelve*—Ajax, Staples, Minn.; Flim Bates, Canton, Ohio; Florence B. Boulton, New York, N. Y.; John Carlisle, Augusta, Ky.; L. P. Carr, Soda Springs, Idaho; Thomas Fletcher, Stettler, Alberta, Canada; W. R. G., Maywood, Ill.; F. A. Gauntt, Oklahoma City, Okla.; Neon, Rochester, N. Y.; Edward F. Raiford, Holland, Va.; Trams, South Bend, Ind.; A. Traveller, Washington, D. C.; Ty N. Twist, London, Ontario, Canada; Tyro V, Perrysville, Pa.; Zircon, Cheyenne, Wyo.

*Eleven*—Arthur J. Brooks, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada; John T. Straiger, Brooklyn, N. Y.

*Ten*—Alex Brown, Sacramento, Calif.; G. Hirano, Las Animas, Colo.; Jer-Lac, Timmins, Ontario, Canada; David Seltzer, New York, N. Y.; D. G. S., Colusa, Calif.

*Nine*—Pap, Oreana, Idaho; Tom Roberts, New Castle, Pa.; Benjamin Skowronski, Yonkers, N. Y.; Edward Stratton, Camden, N. J.; Will Will, White Plains, N. Y.

*Eight*—Kenneth Currell, Johnstown, Pa.; Daffy Dill, Bangor, Me.; Frank Henkel, Jr., Wood-Ridge, N. J.; W. B. A. P., Baltimore, Md.; Karl D. Sherley, Tacoma, Wash.; R. L. Watson, San Antonio, Tex.

*Seven*—Recipeo, Chicago, Ill.

*Six*—Aien Aristeuin, Brighton, Mass.; A Has-Been, Union Grove, Wis.; Egroeg III, Urbana, Ill.; H. J. Haewecker, Middle Village, L. I., N. Y.; Margaret Holmes, New London, Conn.; Hoodwink, Bastrop, Tex.; G. M. Hunt, Madeira, Ohio; \*Jokel, Salt Lake City, Utah; \*Cap Mac, Salt Lake City, Utah; L. J. Raba, Stevensville, Mich.; Frank Rummell, Astoria, N. Y.; T. G. S., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; Logan Simard, Pasadena, Calif.; Superior, Superior, Wis.; Albert M. Taylor, Luke Field, Territory of Hawaii; Tom-Tom, (No Address); Mono Verde, Min-

neapolis, Minn.; Verba, Seattle, Wash.; Zoe E. Walsh, St. Louis, Mo.; Yumca, Ocean View, Pa.

*Five*—Margaret Chamberlain, Buffalo, N. Y.; Chemist, New York, N. Y.; T. E. Roberts & W. F. Hall, New Castle, Pa.; Kappa Kappa, Seattle, Wash.; Paul Kowalski, Syracuse, N. Y.; Octogenarian, Fancy Prairie, Ill.; Alfred Pitrashe, Chicago, Ill.; H. E. Quillian, Greenville, Ala.; Vincent C. Yonusaites, Brooklyn, N. Y.

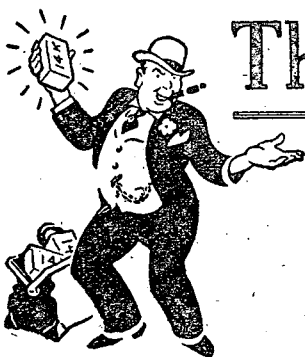
*Four*—Aristocrat, Chicago, Ill.; Miss Eleanor Barnes, Allen, Nebr.; Harry R. Bell, Columbus, Ohio; Joseph Candela, Harrison, N. Y.; Q. E. D., Miami, Fla.; Irene Laun, Washington, D. C.; Miss Kathleen MacCoy, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada; Pangram, Lakewood, Ohio; Captain St. Pierre, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Loula, Stockton, Calif.

*Three*—L. A. Chapin, Aberdeen, S. D.; Joseph Gabry, Jr., Newton, N. J.; Edward Goggin, Chicago, Ill.

*Two*—James Curtis, Chicago, Ill.; Cyril, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Edwin Duryea, Ozone Park, N. Y.; E. Sthar Odilnu, Atchison, Kans.

*One*—Effendi, New York, N. Y.; C. B. Gilles, Hallettsville, Tex.; Quefanon, Roxbury Station, Conn.

*Corrections*—W. R. G., Maywood, Ill., 24 Answers for March, instead of 18 as previously credited; H. F. Wickner, Las Vegas, Nev., 24 Answers for March instead of 12; Lethargic, Los Angeles, Calif., 23 Answers for March instead of 18; Elvin C. Paynter, Millville, N. J., 11 Answers for March not previously credited, also 12 Answers for February instead of 10; Wm. Atherton, Fargo, N. D., 24 Answers for January instead of 23; The Griffin, Swansea, Mass., 24 Answers for January instead of 23; A. R. Zorn, Perris, Calif., 24 Answers for January instead of 23, as previously credited.



# They're Swindling You!

The Coin Catalogue Racket

By

Frank Wrentmore

*This is the thirty-ninth of a series of articles exposing business rackets that cost you billions of dollars every year! Mr. Wrentmore is an authority on swindles and frauds, well known to legal, financial, and commercial associations.—The Editor.*

**D**URING the past year, the post office department has not been entirely inattentive to sellers of coin catalogues—because of a rapidly spreading evil in connection with them.

On January 16, 1935, a fraud order was issued against "Coins, Inc.," "U. S. Coin Co.," "Coin Collectors Club," "Premium Coin Company," and the "U. S. Stamp Co.," all operated from Milwaukee by a man named Cressy.

Mr. Cressy bought coins, \$1,500 worth, but received \$16,500 for catalogues, which the post office department describes as, "merely small three and four page leaflets listing alleged values of a number of coins or stamps of various descriptions. Other data therein is to the effect that the prices quoted are for coins in an 'uncirculated' condition. Computation shows that in order to fulfill all of the various conditions required in connection with

the appraisal of coins by these concerns it is necessary for the would-be seller to expend a sum in excess of fifty cents; in the event that coins are forwarded to the company without fulfillment of these requirements, they are held, pending receipt of return postage."

Now let us jump to another fraud order issued on September 21, 1935. Keith Montgomery of Grand Rapids, Michigan, once had a good job as a gasoline filling station attendant, but Keith had more ambition than common sense and common honesty, so he published advertisements which read:

INDIAN AND LINCOLN HEAD PENNIES wanted. Will pay up to \$2 each if over 10 years old. Certain pennies worth \$53. Latest listing 10c. American Coin Co., Box 219, Grand Rapids, Mich.

To some of those who mailed ten cents to him, Keith sent a four-page printed leaflet listing various coins and their maximum values. Keith's appraisal fee was twenty-five cents. The post office investigated and the fraud order followed. Then there is Mr. Romano's ten-cent "catalogue" which is

"I am glad to endorse the program of *Detective Fiction Weekly* which will bring to its readers the truth about rackets and racketeers. No man can be swindled if he knows in advance what the swindler is going to do—and nobody *wants* to be swindled."—Edward L. Greene, General Manager of the National Better Business Bureau.

a four-page leaflet as described above. Mr. Romano's appraisal fee, as stated in his literature, is one dollar for from one to one hundred coins.

Mr. Romano urges remitters to purchase his ten-cent catalogues, five hundred for five dollars — one cent each, and says, "Just think! After you have sold the five hundred lists which cost you only one cent each you have received fifty dollars, leaving you a profit of forty-five dollars."

I wonder if someone's "Just think!" started Keith Montgomery on the road to a fraud order?

Mr. Romano addresses his "Just think!" to men, women, boys and girls." The men and women can usually think for themselves, but it is hardly fair to the boys and girls.

Certainly, Mr. Romano *may* be privileged to conduct his business as he sees fit, but it is equally certain that it is not in the public's interest to be led on into paying first ten cents, then twenty-five cents, then one dollar, in order to learn what Mr. Romano is willing to pay for an 1890 cent with the Indian standing on his head.

**T**HERE *are* many honest and reputable dealers in stamps and coins, of course. I talked to one of them today and he told me that certain phases of their business had degenerated into a racket and he *gave* me a small booklet published by his firm which contains some danger signals.

For example, the Romano advertisement included with your letter is headed, "Old Money Wanted, \$2,000 for 1c." The honest dealer in his booklet says, "Offers \$2,000 for 1c. In

all the numismatic world, there can be but one coin referred to in this offer, a unique specimen of the U. S. cent dated 1799, and the only one known of this date in mint state. This coin once changed hands for a sum in excess of \$2,000, but it is not now for sale, and if it were, it would not bring \$2,000 at public auction even if every collector and every dealer in the world were competing for this valuable and coveted possession.

"Needless to say that the small town dealers would not pay \$2,000 for it, notwithstanding their extensively publicized offers to do so. They will, however, accept ten cents to one dollar from all and sundry who are intrigued to the extent of sending such an amount for a list of coins for which the dealer promises to pay huge sums, knowing full well that the coins sought after either do not exist or are in museums or great collections which are not on the market."

The honest dealer, who, by the way, is anxious to buy coins, goes on to say, "Right here, let us say *there are no rare coins in circulation*. That a large part of such advertising is fraudulent there can be no doubt, but it should be said in justice to the periodicals and newspapers carrying the advertising that they are not aware of the fraud they are aiding and abetting, and that they would not accept such advertising in their columns if they were aware of its nature."

To the reader of such advertising, I believe Mr. Romano has given the best advice in the two words I have quoted so frequently—

"Just think!"

Next Week—Magic Horse Collars

# Solving Cipher Secrets

A cipher is secret writing. The way to solve ciphers is to experiment with substitute letters until real words begin to appear. In solving, notice the frequency of certain letters. For instance, the letters e, t, a, o, n, i, are the most used in our language. So if the puzzle maker has



M. E. OHAVER  
"Sunnyam"

used X to represent e, X will probably appear very frequently. Combinations of letters will also give you clues. Thus, the affixes -ing, -ion, -ally are frequent. Read the helpful hints at the beginning of this department each week. The first cryptogram each week is the easiest.

**FLASH:** We have a nonagenarian—no less—in our midst! On February 16 last, C. F., known to the uninitiated as Charles Fuller, 416 E. 27th St., Baltimore, Md., reached his ninetieth birthday! Our heartiest congratulations, C. F.! We wish you many happy returns of the day and are sure that our cryptofans join us in these felicitations!

Unnecessary to add, C. F. is an enthusiastic and expert constructor and solver of cryptograms, being a charter member of our *Inner Circle Club*. On his 90th birthday, C. F.'s solving record stood at 1,114 answers, sent to this department! And his solutions arrive regularly as clockwork every week! Great work, C. F.! And again, our congratulations!

Augmenting the roster of forty-two charter members published May 23, and the three additional members named June 6, our *Inner Circle Club*—which is composed of solvers who have 1,000 or more cipher solutions to their credit—now announces three more new members, qualified for membership by solutions submitted last March.

The three welcomed this week are: U. U. JEFF, Massillon, Ohio, totaling 1,005 answers with the March 7 issue; JOKELE, Salt Lake City, Utah, totaling 1,003 answers with the March 14 issue; and Alvin Robb, London, Ontario, Canada, totaling 1,003 answers with the March 28 issue. Members qualifying with April solutions will be announced next month.

Last week's Inner Circle cipher, Frank J. Ryan's No. 156, provided entry through SASZBUY, the pattern of which suggested *against*. This supposition, of course, checked with the ending -ZBA (-ing) and the 4-letter groups ASBA (gang) and USBA (sang). UYPSBAF (st-ang-) and ASBA-DZBA (gang-ing), evidently *strange* and *gangling*, would then follow; etc.

Now for this week's ciphers! Vedette's division problem uses a two-word key phrase, numbered

01234 56789. Suggested solution: find *zero* by inspection; separate the *odd* and *even* symbols; compare S — R = E and E — C = S; etc. Try to identify KOA and the phrase KU OGEA YAAV in Chanticleer's cryptogram, and then look to the last four words.

Waltraw contributes a limerick wherein a comparison of FVN, VN, FVGZ, and GZ should prove helpful! Follow up with EYD, EDYR, and O. Then try ZFNOTGHM, noting OH and TGEN. In Eatosin's alliterative message, probably the most vulnerable spot is XGGKGZXLZ, which may be unlocked through the ending -ZXLZ. XZZXKLAP and XZA will then follow.

Compare the endings of groups 6 and 8 in Kriptobens' message, which comprises five 10-letter words and ten 5-letter words, 100 letters in all! A solution of Scorpio's Inner Circle cipher and the answers to all of this week's cipher puzzles will be published next week. The asterisks in cryptograms, Nos. 158 and 159 are prefixed to capitalized words.

No. 157—Cryptic Division. By Vedette.

SEA) FLEETS (EFC  
FICC

ISTT  
IRKE

EAFS  
ELAT

LEK

No. 158—Long May It Wave! By Chanticleer.

UHS \*VGKNUVGZ AXYZAX NP PGNF KU OGEA YAAV LNS-  
PK RGZZAF “\*UZF \*CZUSB” YB \*RGTGKGV \*DNZZNGX  
\*FSNEAS, UL KOA PONT \*ROGSZAP \*FUCCAKK, NV KOA  
BAGS \*ANCOKAAV \*OHVFSAF GVF \*KONSKB:

No. 159—Potted for a Pip. By Waltraw.

O SDGAATN EYD TGEN GZ \*UORNZ \*ANSB; ZGK LPTTNFZ  
ODN GHZGXN VGZ HNSB. VN SORN FY FVGZ AYGHF GH  
O MORLTGHM UYGHF—EYD ZFNOTGHM OH OSN EDIR  
FVN XNSB!

No. 160—A Toothsome Target. By Eatosin.

XYXZABD XDEFAD XGGXHKL N XLEKALZ XDZ, XXXXKLAP  
XEBZA XEEBDXEH; XZZAYRZAP XSSANAP “XRRSA XEZ.”  
XEEKPALZ XTUKPAP. XNKSA XGGKGZXLZ XZA XRRSA!

No. 161—Holiday Prank. By Kryptobens.

KODAVPZUYE SNOZUTDYRP BNTLHGFRXP NTFRX AED-  
UX; DKXNLYUHTP YEXHG PONZKRXUTB FXNTV ZUFY  
GDYRX GEUOR HYERX SHOVP GDYAE!

No. 162—Flowers of Fire. By Scorpio.

KEXHGKZKO TBNEHUXQKPL: VUHEKZHUV NEXRUHL  
SBNZHPKS VPAPOB LRBDZNV; LXPKHPOOZKH LTZNR  
LHNUZCL YNZKXQPKS NZVPZOOB; TEOBXQNECZHPX  
TEPKHL ZMOEZH YUKUZHQ XUNGOUZK XEKXZFPBH.

#### LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

151—Key:    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9  
              C A K E F L O U R S

152—California oranges are sold in almost every seaport. Each orange is thoroughly washed, dried, sprayed with hot paraffine, polished, graded, stamped, and packed.

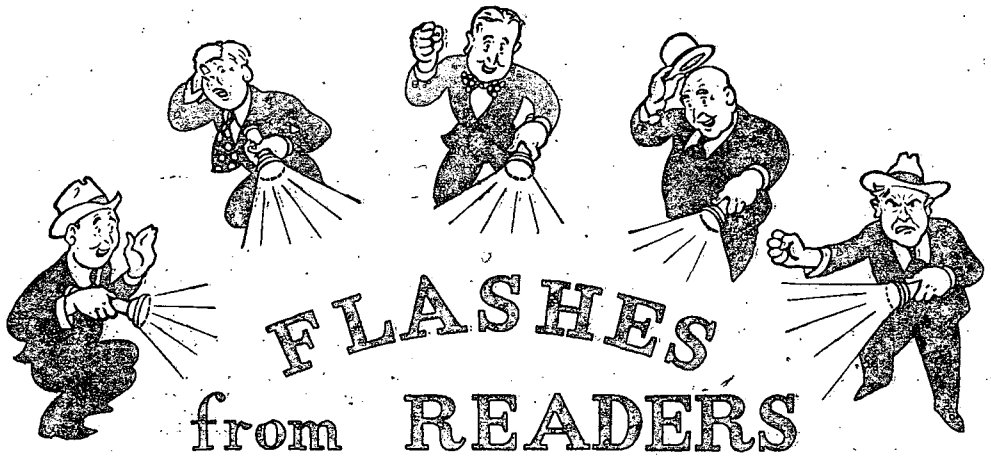
153—“Before green apples blush,  
Before green nuts embrown,  
Why, one day in the country  
Is worth a month in town.”  
—Christina G. Rosetti.

154—Cipher solvers neatly grasp intricate conversions translating alphabet. Comparison illuminates logical cryptographic design.

155—Wednesday, local widow caught plump rainbow trout. Reported weight, about eight pounds. Thursday, doubtful anglers thronged along bushy river banks.

156—Angered menage manager wrangled about strange gang Triangle Range hanged. “Dang dangerous,” sang gangling gangster hanging angularly against banging mangle.

Join our *Cipher Solvers' Club* for July, cryptofans! One or more answers to this week's puzzles will enroll you! Address: M. E. Ohaver, DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY, 280 Broadway, New York, N. Y.



WE realize that this little introduction takes space which really belongs to you readers. But just a minute! You folks can have your say a bit further down the page. Have you read **DILEMMA OF THE DEAD LADY?** For a long time, now, you've been reading Cornell Woolrich's short stories. What do you think of his first long novelette? You'll miss a great treat if you pass it by. How about **BROTHERS OF HIN?** Arden X. Pangborn, the author, knows Chinatown from the lowliest home where slant-eyed babies play with bright beads to the calm, incense-perfumed interiors of the most beautiful joss-houses. He has a lot to say. And *Paul C. Pitt*, that suave swashbuckler, is with us again in **THE PERFECT VICTIM**. We like Pitt, don't you? Now it's your turn. Take it away!

#### Instructions to traveling salesmen:

DEAR EDITOR:

I've worked out a little system with regard to **DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY** which I thought some of the other readers might like to know about.

I'm a traveling salesman, covering a territory made up mostly of little towns. I go over it with an auto and an attached trailer, and naturally, when the day is over, instead of losing all my commissions in one of the ever-present poker

games or crap games, I save money by reading the best detective story magazine that money can buy. You all know the one I mean.

**DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY** hits all the newsstands out my way on Wednesdays. There's just about enough in it to take care of all my spare time in a week, but when it doesn't, that's when I resort to the system I mentioned above.

In the trailer, right next to the head of the bed, I have a good-sized bookcase. And believe it or not, I have every issue of DFW from January 6, 1934, lined up in it. It's quite a library of outstanding fiction by now, and when I want something to read, that's the place to find it.

And when I've finished the newest copy, I stick it on the end of the shelf, and some day I'll get around to reading the stories in it all over again.

I think that **DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY** is about the best investment a traveling salesman can make. Wednesday is my red-letter day. All you chaps who sit in lonely hotel rooms, or waste your money on beers and pin-games, can profit by this experience of mine. At least, I sure did.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH WORTH,  
El Paso, Texas.

A former news dealer has the floor.

DEAR SIR:

This isn't really a letter to you. It's an open letter to the readers of **DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY**, with a postscript to the news dealer.

Probably I ought to present my credentials first. I'm an ex-news dealer, and I'd probably still be one if my father-in-law hadn't set me up in a different line of business.

I remember very well, though, that many a customer of DFW was turned away because all my copies had been sold out, and it was too much

of a nuisance for the customer to wait until I could reorder.

That's what I want to talk about. It would be a big thing in the relationship between news-dealers and their customers if the customers would place standing orders for DFW with them and pick up the copy each week. News dealers could help this along—and help themselves—by suggesting it to customers who seem to be regulars.

In that way, the dealer knows in advance how many sure sales he has, and he can conduct his business more efficiently. And the buyer always knows just where his copy is waiting for him, and that he won't have to traipse from stand to stand in order to find the latest copy.

Please don't publish my real name with this letter. And here's a last word to the dealers: Put DFW out in front, boys. Give it good display and watch it make money for you. It was one of my winners, and I'm still an every-week reader.

BURTON JENSSEN,  
Fargo, North Dakota.

It's about time for this to happen.

DEAR EDITOR:

I haven't noticed any letters from cryptofans in FLASHES FROM READERS for a deuce of a long time, and I wonder why. Cipher solving is without question one of the greatest games in the world. I've been at it almost a year now, although I haven't had much luck in M. E. Ohaver's CIPHER SOLVERS' CLUB. But I'm still trying.

I used to think that crossword puzzles were swell. I used to think that they called for a lot of imagination and ingenuity. But I have learned that almost any dub can work out a crossword puzzle, whereas it takes brains to do ciphers.

But don't let that scare you away. The reason more people aren't hipped on codes is that they don't know enough about it. Once a fellow gets interested in it, it's the most fascinating thing in the world—the best one-man game I ever came across.

Yours truly,  
BEATRICE WILLIAMSON,  
Atlanta, Georgia.

#### CRYPTOGRAM FANS!

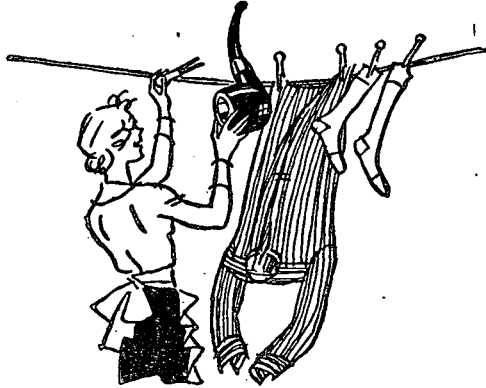
"Solving Cipher Secrets" is a fascinating word game. Have you tried M. E. Ohaver's popular department in DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY? Mr. Ohaver has prepared a book full of advice and hints as to how to play the game. Experts will find the book invaluable. Novices will find it opens up entirely new angles. Get

#### "CRYPTOGRAM SOLVING"

By M. E. Ohaver

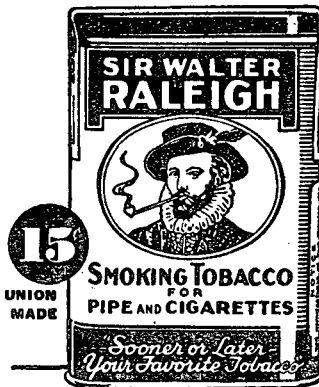
Send 25c to DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY  
280 Broadway, New York City

## HINT TO WIVES WITH TENDER NOSES

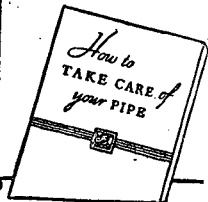


IF he won't clean his pipe and give up that coal-gas tobacco, clip this ad and lay it beside his easy chair along with a pack of pipe cleaners and a tin of Sir Walter Raleigh. 'Tis thus many a loving wife has freed her home from tobacco far too strong and odorous for this sensitive world. Sir Walter Raleigh is a fascinating blend of extra-mild and extra-fragrant Kentucky Burleys. Smoked regularly in a well-kept briar, it makes the air clearer and sweeter, and your curtains stay fresher. Sir Walter is a sure cure for nose-bite and tongue-bite. And how men are buying it at only 15¢ a tin! Now it's your move!

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## DEATH AT THEIR HEELS

*A Novelette of New York's Underworld by William Edward Hayes*

THEY were all playing the most dangerous game! A game in which human lives were at stake in the mad scramble to snatch a fortune in silver which was mysteriously cached away. Of course, the only rule for this contest of wits and gun-play was "All's fair in love and crime." But it was up to *Private Detective Drew Kiley* to remind the players that there was a force which supersedes all rules, no matter what they may be—THE LAW!

## THE MONEY-BED AND THE MONEY-BELT

*A "Lady from Hell" Story by Eugene Thomas*

ANOTHER episode in the adventurous and glamorous life of *Vivian Legrand, the Lady from Hell*. She and her partner, *Adrian Wiley*, find themselves aboard the pirate ship, *Esteban*, sailing for ports unknown. *Miguel*, the captain, becomes criminally insane, and there is only one way out for the red-headed siren. She violates the oldest law of the sea in an attempt to salvage her fortune and her friends.

J. LANE LINKLATER has written "A MESSAGE FROM PHILLY," another exciting yarn about *Paul C. Pitt*, the debonair confidence man, who knows his way around the block three times—and then some! "THE DEATH MELODY," by ANTHONY M. RUD, is a smashing tale of a gangster who couldn't bear to see his victims die unless it was to music.

July 11th Issue **DETECTIVE** FICTION WEEKLY On Sale July 1st

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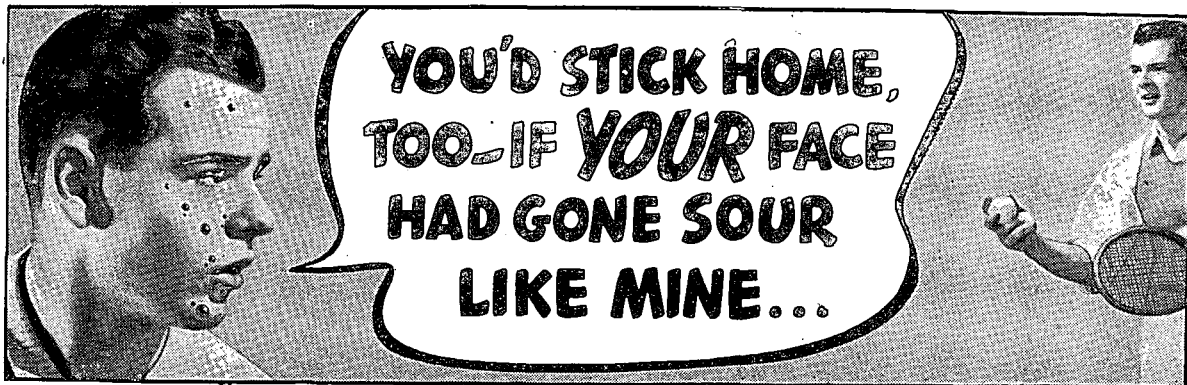


## Old Leg Trouble HEALED WHILE WORKING

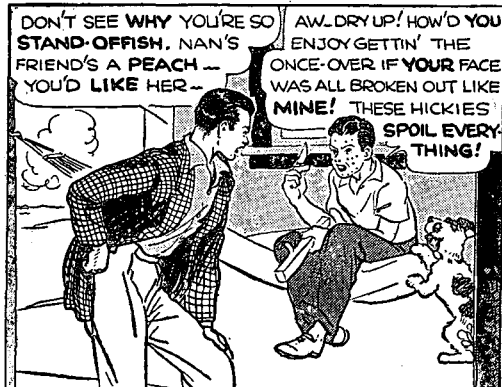
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LOOKED  
LIKE A  
WASHOUT  
UNTIL \_**

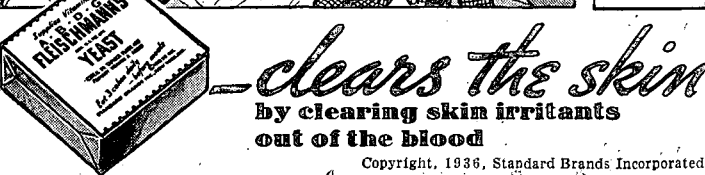


**Don't let Adolescent Pimples make YOU want to shun your friends**

**A** PIMPLY SKIN is a real social handicap to any boy or girl. Yet this condition is very common after the start of adolescence—from about 13 to 25 years of age, or even longer.

During this period important glands develop. Final growth takes place—and disturbances occur throughout the entire body. The skin, especially, gets oversensitive. Waste poisons in the blood irritate this sensitive skin. Pimples appear.

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*It's the Tobacco that Counts  
and Luckies are less acid*



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